

# Key to Europe

**AEGEE Annual Review**  
2012/2013



EUROPEAN STUDENTS' FORUM

# STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

*Agora Utrecht, May 2000*

We, the members of AEGEE,

Realising that the young people of Europe are building the future of our continent,

Aspiring to a peaceful Europe free of obstacles and enmities, of false divisions and forced differences,

Resolved to remove barriers between the peoples of Europe,

Determined to contribute to a Europe of co-operation and understanding,

Creating a network of young Europeans desiring to spread our ideals and ideas concerning Europe,

Hereby declare

Our belief that, while cherishing our diversity and respecting the character of our regions, we can find on the basis of our cultural and historical heritage the principles that unite us and guide us in our effort to strengthen the European conscience,

Our faith in a Europe standing for liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and our will to co-operate with institutions that promote these concepts,

Our resolve to establish an open Europe which recognises the importance of all cultures in the shaping of its past, present, and future and which plays an active role in fostering peace, stability and prosperity throughout the world,

Our intention to promote unlimited access to education as being of fundamental importance to increase mutual understanding,

Our desire to encourage student mobility in order to fight prejudice and xenophobia by increasing people's awareness of different cultures, and

Our strong belief that our association is a unique platform enabling us to contribute to these visions of Europe.

## Dear Reader,



A year full of difficulties has passed. This has been a turbulent one for young people: their feelings of pessimism and fear for their future have shaped a year full of right and wrong decisions. The tide is high, the strong waves rise, but the uncertainty has also brought challenges and opportunities to grasp. This past year has raised lots of doubts and questions – can we actually do something ourselves? Can we change the situation to a better one? Can we actually be the ones to make a change?

Merely taking a passive approach and relying on the decisions of politicians and governments is an irresponsible attitude, to say the least. We need to contribute in the decision-making process that will shape our future, and change the current situation. However, this is something that we cannot do alone: each and every one of us has to join in and be a part of it.

AECEE has gathered all of us under one clear vision of a united Europe. One Europe for all of us. We have stood up when our rights have been violated, we have spoken up and we have defended what we believed in, and we believe that things have to change. Our belief is that change has to start from ourselves. We believe in the voice of the young people that compose our society.

Each of us is a drop in an ocean, and an ocean without drops is nothing. It can be stormy sometimes, but the waves, those drops altogether, can peacefully change our opinion on quiet, calming waters. A wave can bring change. It can destroy, but it can also shape and improve what is already there. We want to be drops in this wave. We want to choose our own direction and the change to make.

Water defines us, and every breeze that comes along can easily influence us and change the waves, re-shape our vision and motivate us to rise and fight for what we believe in.

In the following pages, you will dive into a sea of opportunities, braveness, participation, multiculturalism, improvements, and directions for changes. Take a breath and enjoy!

**Alma**, AEGEE-Riga & **Hara**, AEGEE-Peiraias,

*Editors-in-Chief*

Memorial

Franck Biancheri



11. March 1961 - 30. October 2012

# In Memorial of Franck Biancheri

*A more democratic Europe with more influence worldwide, such is the project Franck Biancheri, founder of AEGEE-Europe, had been relentlessly fighting for the last thirty years, just until he died. This fight took on various forms along the years, since Franck Biancheri always placed general and collective interest before anything else and took endless care that no specific interest group had any hold over it. There lied all the difficulty of his political action, but also all its value.*

During his studies, in the framework of Science Po's Student Office and with some of his friends in charge of other student offices from other schools in Paris, his general European project was born, launching the first European student organisation in 1985: AEGEE-Europe, after a conference held in 1984 called EGEE. Two years later AEGEE was displaying already some 70 university antennae throughout Europe and over 10,000 members.

In 1987 he contributed to the creation of the ERASMUS project, drawing President Mitterrand's and Chancellor Kohl's attention to the fact that the French, German, and British education ministries were in fact trying to bury the project. As a result, the French President strongly reasserted his support to the ERASMUS programme, making it a decisive moment of the programme's unblocking and adoption.

In 1988, he created the first trans-European political party, Initiative pour une Démocratie Européenne (Initiative for a European Democracy -IDE-). He would have never imagined, though, that IDE would remain standing for the following 20 years, being the only successful trans-European electoral attempt until the creation of his other political party: Newropeans.

In the 1990s, he gave himself the means to perpetuate AEGEE's mission by creating Prometheus-Europe, an association of young European professionals dedicated to the information on EU policies and programmes serving both potential beneficiaries (top-down information) and institutions (bottom-up evaluation). Prometheus-Europe was engaged in a series of global meetings, organising around 30 conferences on the future of Europe's relations with the rest of the world: the Arab world, Latin America, Asia, Turkey, Russia, and North America.

In October 2000 Prometheus-Europe held a

congress entitled "Newropeans 2000 - New Europe, New challenges, New generations" in partnership with other organisations, including AEGEE-Europe. This congress was to celebrate the emerging of new generations of Europeans born after the Treaty of Rome and to contribute to tomorrow's Europe. It gathered more than 2,000 young Europeans together with many heads of states and governments, ministers, and European commissioners; and it gave its name to a citizen organisation which then became a political party in 2005.

In June 2002, he launched one of the world's biggest e-democracy projects, EU Student Vote, to elect the first EU student Council by on-line voting. Thanks to this project, he was elected one of the 25 people/projects "who changed the Internet and the political world".

In 2002-2003, he conducted 100 debates on "Where is Europe going?" in 100 different EU cities with 100 different civil organisations in the framework of the Newropeans Democracy Marathon.

He was elected one of the 'European Heroes of the year 2003' by the readers of the Time Magazine.

In 2005, he engaged himself in a Transatlantic Citizen Marathon and visited 10 different US states where he conducted conferences and debates with US citizens on the future of EU-US relations.

The same year, Newropeans was launched as a political party.

In 2010, the Spanish presidency of the EU honoured him by including his name among the "20 people who changed our world" for his decisive role in favour of the ERASMUS project.

He died on the 30th of October 2012 after a four-year-long fight with cancer.

## Facts:

- Born 11/03/1961
- Teachers' family
- Only child
- Graduated: Political Science Institute of Paris

# Content

- Preface of Editor-in-Chief – 4
- In Memorial of Franck Biancheri – 4
- Content – 4
- Words of Welcome from Martin Schulz – 4
- Words of Welcome from Luis Alvarado Martínez – 4

## About AEGEE

- What is AEGEE? – 4
- AEGEE's Timeline – 4
- AEGEE in Platforms – 4
- AEGEE's Cooperations – 4
- Some Call it Europe, We Call it Home! – 4
- MEMBERS' STATISTICS – 4
- AEGEE's Impact – 4
- AEGEE's Structure – 4
- AEGEE's Projects – 4
- AEGEE's Working Groups – 4
- Comité Directeur 2012-2013 – 4
- Re-shaping the AEGEE Identity – 4
- Bringing the AEGEE Look – 4
- When Thematics Matter – 4
- Towards a Stronger Policy Role for AEGEE – 4

- AEGEE's Social Responsibility – 4
- A New Head Office – 4
- AEGEE for Erasmus and Erasmus+! – 4
- New Honorary Members of AEGEE-Europe – 4
- Les Anciens Coming Closer to the Network – 4
- AEGEE's Patrons – 4
- AEGEE's Partners and Supporters – 4

## In the Spotlight

- From Russia with love – 4
- Erasmus at Threat! – 40
- Breeze of Change in Hungary – 40
- Young People Do Care! – 41
- Meeting the Azerbaijani Institutions – 41
- Youth for Democracy in Belarus – 42
- Protests in Turkey – the Last Drop? – 42
- LGBT Rights at the Spotlight – 43
- Standing for Youth in Spain – 43

## Advocacy & Policy

- When NGOs Come as One – 45
- AEGEE and the UN – 46

# Impressum

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- Erasmus + – 46
- EuroSD Starts its Revolution - 47
- Regional Youth Forum: Making Youth Voice Louder – 48
- Calling for a Co-management – 49
- Youth Work Recognition: Make it Count – 50

### Personal Development

- Improving our Future – 54
- 25 Years Developing Through Cultural Exchange – 58
- Youth Entrepreneurship, Enabling the Progress – 60
- The Secret behind Spring Agora Rhein-Neckar – 64
- Develop Yourself With the Academy – 64

### Youth Participation

- Hope, made in Europe – 66
- Welcome, Croatia! – 68
- Y should you Vote? – 69
- Youth Rights.Now – 70

### Bridging Europe

- Borderless Mobility - Myth or Reality? - 72

- Eastern Partnership Project – 74
- Paving the Way for Conflict Resolution – 76
- Let's review Eastern Partnership – 77

### Inclusion of Minorities

- Borrowing Human Books – 79
- Making Dreams Come True – 79
- Immigrants in Europe: A Forgotten Minority – 80
- Sports as a Key to Change Europe – 81
- When Human Rights are at Threat? – 82
- Let's Turn Hate Speech Off – 83
- Think Loudly, Hold On to the Light – 84

### Cultural Experience

- Experiencing a New Dimension of Intercultural Dialogue in AEGEE – 86

### Environment & Sustainability

- Sustainability in AEGEE: Impossible – 94
- First Steps on the Healthy Lifestyle Field – 95

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## Dear Reader,

For some years now, the words often associated with Europe are crisis, austerity and unemployment. With the growth of frustration and without any hope for a real change to the current state of affairs, the prospects of the European Union are challenging. We are facing one of the hardest challenges in the history of the European integration. There is a risk that an entire generation of well-educated, but unemployed young people turns away from the EU.

I don't think we have ever had a challenge like this in our recent history. This is why politicians, decision makers, employers and trade unions owe young people solutions, perspectives and renewed hope.

We need to find the right answers together. The voice of the young must be clear and authoritative. AEGEE can unite the European Youth and make their voices be heard. The concept of the association is a great example on how we can change Europe together. The implementation of the youth in connection with the inclusion of minority groups with the purpose of a unified Europe has shown to be a resounding success.

These are turbulent times. For many people in Europe and especially for the youth, they are hard times. Therefore it was my pleasure to hand the first prize of the youth Charlemagne prize to AEGEE-Europe.

The Spanish project seeks constructive solutions to current problems - the loss of confidence in the EU and the alarmingly high youth unemployment in many Member States.

Europe on Track connects young people throughout Europe both offline and online, giving them the opportunity to express their views and making an original contribution to European integration, especially to the growth of a feeling among young people that 'we are Europe'.

It is for projects like this that I am confident that Europe will be back on track and that the European citizens are a part of creating a Europe that we can be proud of; a Europe that unites all member states and finally creates a European Identity that we can all rely on. It is our future in your hands and I hope that AEGEE will continue its great work.

I wish you all the best and hope to see more of your projects.

Kind regards,

**Martin Schulz**

*President of the European Parliament*



## Dear Reader,

Europe is facing difficult times, rattled by the biggest economic crisis in EU history, bringing along political and social crises and causing citizens to lose faith in the European project. A youth unemployment rate of 25% leaves little hope to the best educated generation in history.

It is not easy to find arguments to still support Schumann and Monnet's dream of a united Europe.

Yet, despite the crisis, the young generation is more prepared than ever. It is young people who are taking the streets protesting and striving for change in the democratic systems. It is young people who are reminding their parents and grandparents that Europe is a dream still worth fighting for. It is young people who accepted the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the EU for having preserved more than 60 years of peace in our continent.

Young people are ready to take action for their own interests.

AEGEE has channelled this energy for almost 30 years, transforming it into a change in society. We have empowered students all over the continent to become change-makers, transforming reality and taking ownership of the European dream, while fostering tolerance, intercultural understanding, democracy, and mobility.

Where others see problems, we see potential opportunities to improve, which is what has taken us this year to win the European Charlemagne Youth Prize 2013 by the Charlemagne Foundation and the European Parliament with our project Europe on Track.

In a year where Human Rights have often been subject to violations around our continent, AEGEE has drafted the Youth Rights.NOW campaign to make young people aware of their rights and to advocate for them towards the member states of the Council of Europe.

Our Eastern Partnership Project has proven the role young people can play in the process of integration of the Eastern Partnership countries. At the same time, our network develops very fast in the Caucasus Region, allowing AEGEE to work on Peacebuilding with its young people.

This might be the most damaging crisis in the history of the EU. But as Jacques Santer, former President of the European Commission once said: **"Europe will be built during its crisis"**. With the upcoming European Parliamentary elections in 2014, the EU has its chance to regain the trust among its people. For the first time, the Election of the President of the European Commission will be determined by the vote of the citizens and we will not miss our chance to bring young people into the spotlight and make them actors of the elections with our Y Vote 2014 project.

Europe is experiencing a moment of change of processes, political leaders, and geographical definition. We will ensure a strong student and youth voice in this period and push for a transition from a Europe of the Member States to a true Europe of Citizens.

**Luis Alvarado Martínez**

*President of AEGEE-Europe/European Students' Forum*

1985



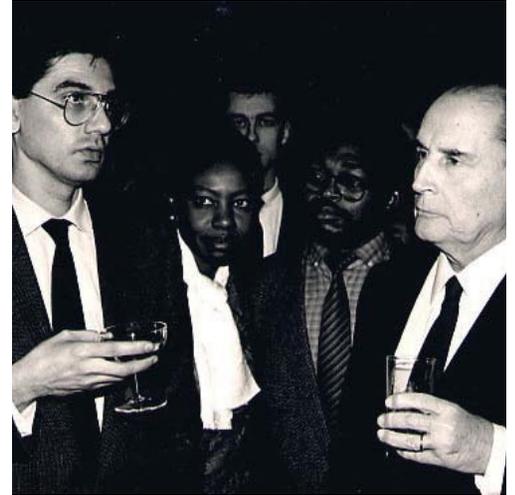
Foundation of AEGEE

1986



First Agora in München

1986



Franck Biancheri lobbying for Erasmus

## What is AEGEE?

Zsófia Komáromi, AEGEE-Budapest

The European Students' Forum AEGEE is one of Europe's biggest student organisations, with 13 000 members in 200 university cities across the continent, welcoming students of all disciplines. It was founded in 1985 in Paris, and has ever since conquered Europe with a Network now spanning across 40 countries from those in Western Europe to the Caucasus and Russia. Throughout the years, the members have changed and many different activities have been developed, but AEGEE's vision has always stayed the same: To create a unified Europe, based on democracy and respect for human rights, to bring together students with different cultural backgrounds, and to provide them with a platform to reach European decision makers. In order to achieve these aims, AEGEE works as a politically independent, secular, and non-profit organisation.

The acronym AEGEE stands for the French *Association des Etats Généraux des Etudiants de l'Europe*. It derives from the first parliament established during the French Revolution, the *États Généraux*,

and the Aegean Sea, where democracy was born 2000 years ago.

### AEGEE Today

Today, AEGEE's network of students and young Europeans provides the ideal platform for volunteers from different nationalities to work together on cross-border activities such as international projects, conferences, seminars, exchanges, training courses, and case study trips. AEGEE operates in a unique structure, as it directly connects its local groups and the European level bodies without any national level of organisation, reflecting AEGEE's ideal of a Europe without borders. Its European level consists of Project Teams, Working Groups, Commissions, Committees, and the European Board of Directors, called the Comité Directeur.

The work of AEGEE's members contributes to achieving the main aims of the organisation, which are the following:

- Promoting a unified Europe without

1991



*Quo Vadis Europe*

1991



*First Agora in the East: Budapest*

1997



*First Network Commission*

prejudices

- Striving for the creation of an open and tolerant society of today and tomorrow
- Fostering democracy, Human Rights, tolerance, cross border cooperation, mobility, and a European dimension within Education
- Representing the rights of students and young people in Europe

As defined in AEGEE's Strategic Plan for 2011-2014, the events and the projects currently run by the organisation focus on three areas: Youth Participation, Bridging Europe, and Inclusion of Minorities. The past year has seen the birth of projects such as Europe on Track, winning the European Charlemagne Youth Prize; and YVote 2014, an initiative aiming to make students and first time voters main actors of the 2014 European Parliament elections.

### *Major Achievements*

When looking at AEGEE's history of 28 years, one

can easily conclude that one of its major achievements is the effective lobbying for the creation of the Erasmus programme in the 1980s. In cooperation with the European Commission, AEGEE played a major role in convincing the EU Member States that mobility programmes are worth investing in. We have continued on this path ever since, promoting programmes and advocating for them, such as Erasmus and Socrates, and the inclusion of more countries in the latter, such as Turkey. AEGEE is also known for its longest running project, the Summer University project that gathers thousands of young people each summer providing courses on a wide range of topics, from language courses to seminars about political, cultural or environmental issues.

AEGEE has participatory status in the activities of the Council of Europe, consultative status at the United Nations, operational status at UNESCO, and is a full member of the European Youth Forum.

1999



The first European School

2000



Borderless Europe Rally

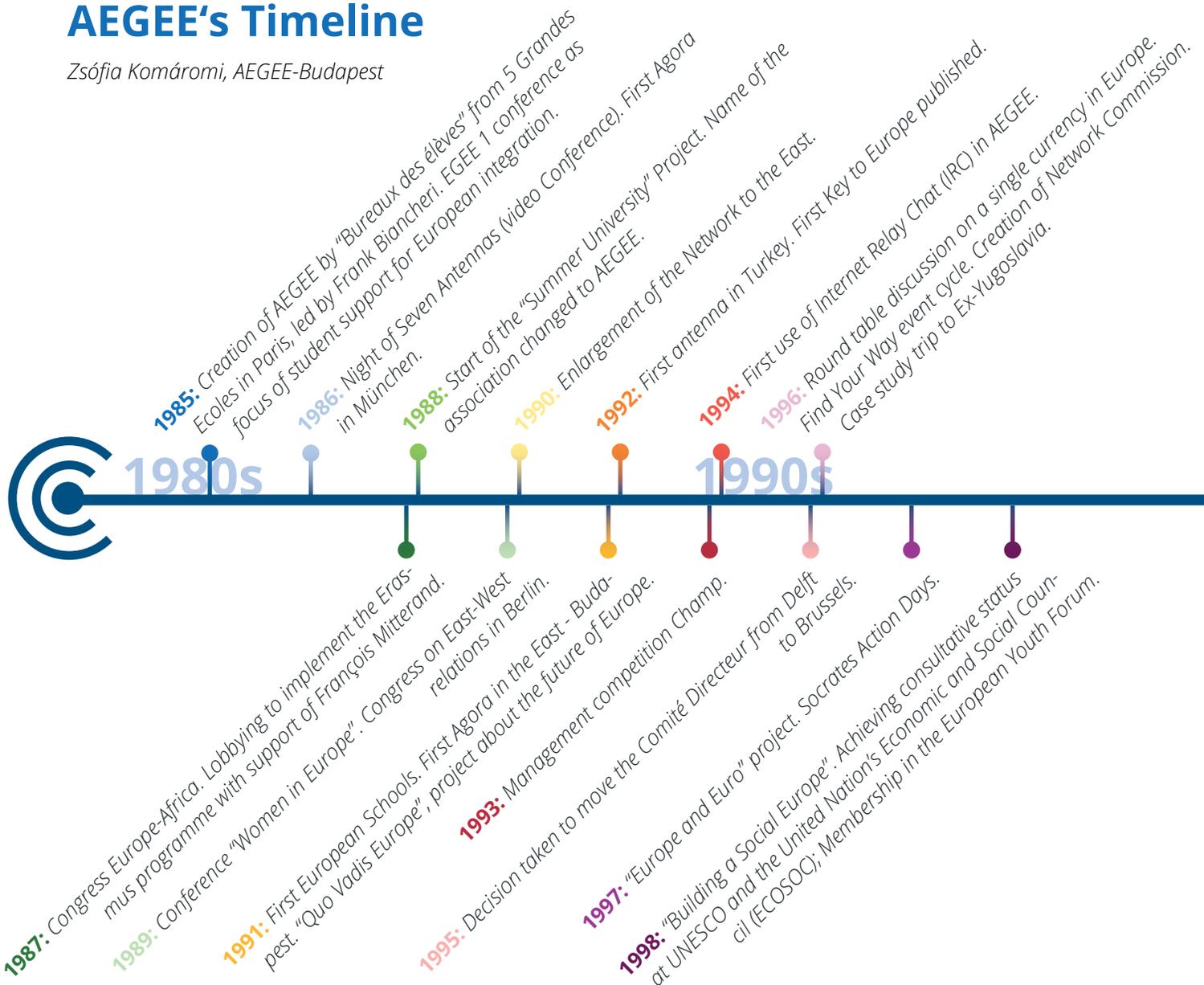
2002



Turkish-Greek-Dialogue

## AEGEE's Timeline

Zsófia Komáromi, AEGEE-Budapest



# 2008



*Sustaining Our Future*

# 2010



*Beyond Europe: Case Study Trip India*

# 2013



*Europe on Track*



## AEGEE in Platforms

*Kathrin Renner, Vice President and External Relations Director of AEGEE-Europe*

AEGEE-Europe is member of the following platforms and advocacy bodies:

### *European Youth Forum (YFJ, from Youth Forum Jeunesse)*

The European Youth Forum is a platform of youth organisations in Europe, bringing together 99 national youth councils and international youth organisations. It represents the common interests of millions of young people and advocates for youth rights in international institutions such as the institutions of the European Union, the Council of Europe, and the United Nations.

AEGEE-Europe is currently represented in the Board of the European Youth Forum through Mirosław Krzanik, and in the Working Group for Education through Marko Grdošić.

### *European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning (EUCIS-LLL)*

EUCIS-LLL gathers 33 European networks working in education and training, and is the main advocacy platform in the field of education policy towards the European Institutions.

AEGEE-Europe is currently represented in the Steering Committee of EUCIS-LLL through Lucille Rieux.

### *Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe*

The Advisory Council (AC) is made up of 30 representatives from youth NGOs and networks which provide opinions and input for all the youth sector activities of the Council of Europe. It co-manages and co-decides on policies, programme priorities, and budget allocation.

AEGEE-Europe is currently represented in the Advisory Council by Luis Alvarado Martínez.

### *European Movement International (EMI)*

EMI is an international organisation composed of 42 National Councils and 32 associated members whose objective it is to contribute to the establishment of a united, federal Europe founded on the principles of peace, democracy, liberty, solidarity, and respect for basic human rights.

### *European Civic Forum (ECF)*

The European Civic Forum is a transnational network that brings together over 100 associations and NGOs across 27 countries in Europe actively working to promote civic and popular ownership of Europe.

AEGEE-Europe is currently represented in the Steering Committee of the European Civic Forum through Luis Alvarado Martínez.

### *Civil Society Platform on Multilingualism*

The Civil Society platform on Multilingualism consults the European Commission on all issues of multilingualism and promotes multilingualism as one of the key elements to foster European Integration.

AEGEE-Europe is currently represented in the Civil Society Platform through Nico Huurman.

### *Informal Forum of International Student Organisations (IFISO)*

IFISO is a platform of 20 International Student Organisations, covering around 22 million students around the globe. It aims to support and improve international student organisations through networking, cooperation, and sharing knowledge and best practices.

AEGEE-Europe was represented in the Management Team of IFISO in 2013 by Kathrin Renner.

## AEGEE's Cooperations

*Kathrin Renner, Vice President and External Relations Director of AEGEE-Europe*

AEGEE cooperates with the following organisations and institutions:

### *Board of European Students of Technology (BEST)*



BEST is a constantly growing, non-profit and non-political student organisation, striving to help European students of technology to become more internationally minded.

BEST and AEGEE share knowledge and best practices on a daily basis, work together on training opportunities and exchange participants for their events.

### *Youth for Exchange and Understanding (YEU)*



YEU is a network of young people from 30 countries working to promote peace, understanding and cooperation between the young people of the world, in a spirit of respect for human rights.

YEU and AEGEE work together on numerous projects, one of them being the development of certified qualifications for youth workers in NGOs.

### *Debating Europe*



Debating Europe is a platform which connects European citizens and politicians together in an online debate. It takes questions, comments and

ideas of citizens directly to policy makers and experts for them to respond.

Debating Europe and AEGEE promote discussions mutually in their networks.

### *Media Partners:*

#### *EurActiv*



EurActiv is an online media dedicated to EU news and policy debates, providing free in-depth information on EU affairs to more than 675.000 readers in 15 languages.

#### *European Voice*



Both through its weekly newspaper and website, which is updated daily, European Voice brings independent, authoritative and balanced coverage of the latest EU news and analysis.

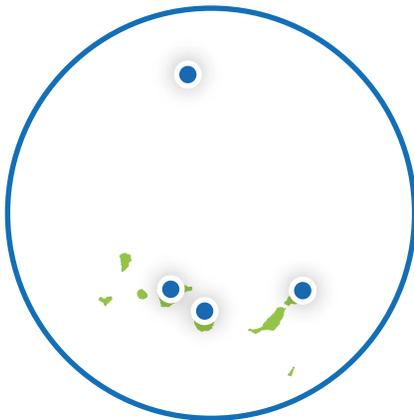
#### *Europe&Me*



E&M is an online lifestyle magazine created by and for young Europeans. Its motto is to make "Europe personal", since Europe is often only identified with politics and bureaucracy.

## Some Call it Europe, We Call it Home!

*Benjamin Doll, AEGEEE-Mainz-Wiesbaden*



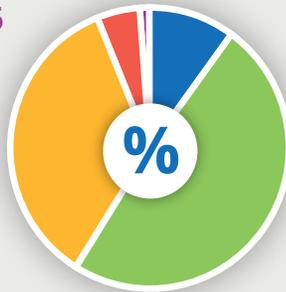
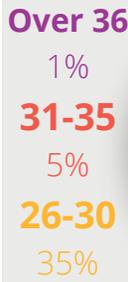
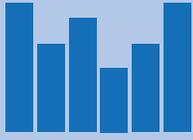
The most west AEGEE locals can be found not on main land in Europe, but on the islands Madeira, Tenerife, Las Palmas and Lanzarote





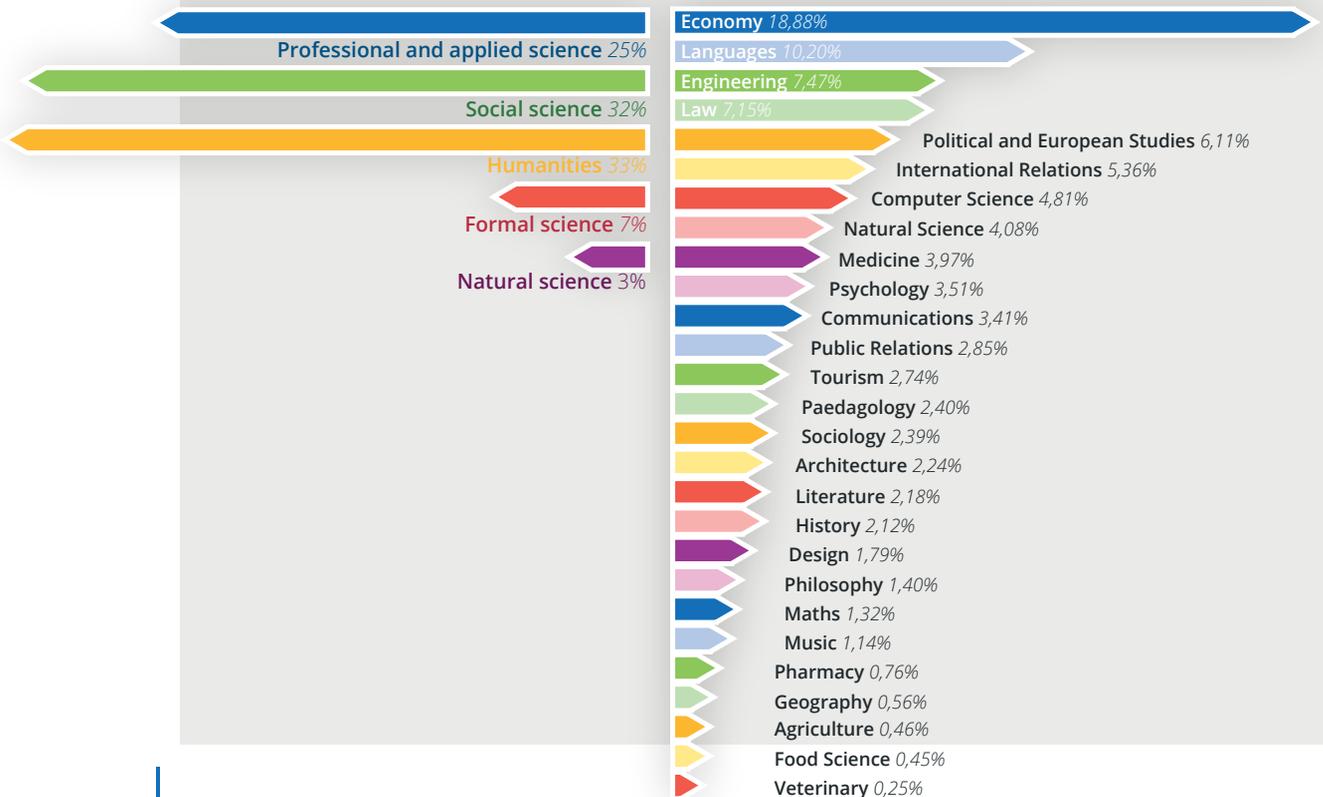
# MEMBERS DISTRIBUTION

## MEMBERS' STATISTICS



# STUDIES

## FIELD OF STUDY | STUDIES



## AEGEE MEMBER FOR...

**More than 5 years**

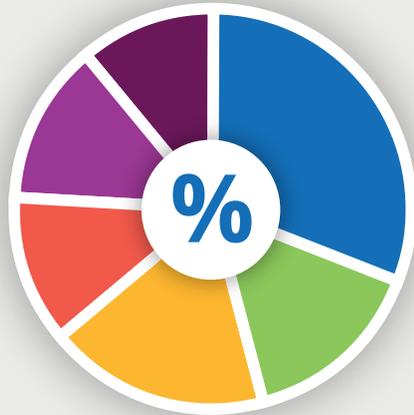
11%

**3 - 5 years**

13%

**2 - 3 years**

12%



**Less than 6 months**

31%

**6 months - 1 year**

15%

**1 - 2 years**

18%

## THE AVERAGE MEMBER



speaks 3 languages



has travelled to conferences and events in 5 countries



has received 50 hours of training on soft skills



has worked with more than 11 different nationalities



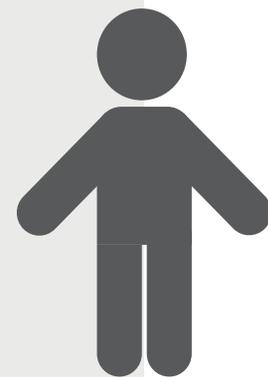
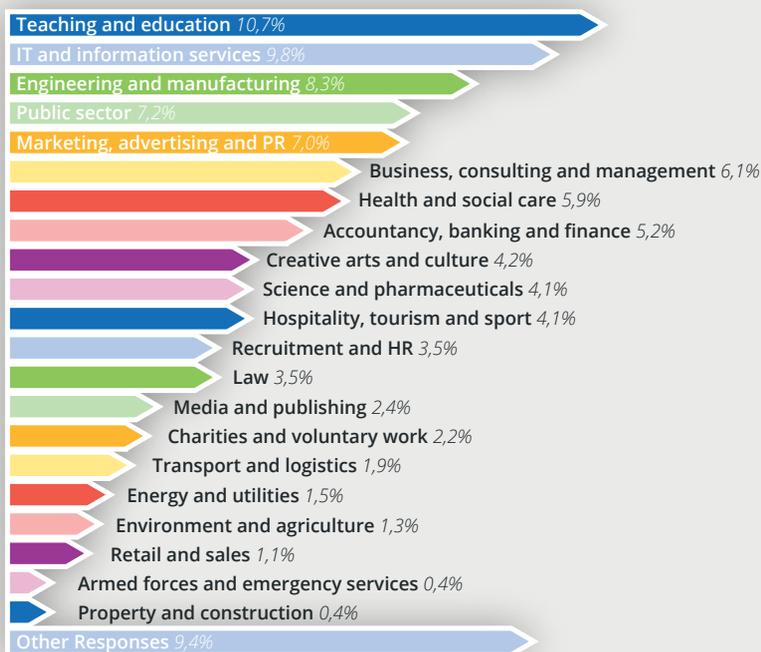
identifies him/herself as a European citizen and is therefore not limited by his or her national background



has led an international team

## WORK

### FIELD OF WORK



# AEGEE'S IMPACT

In 2013 for the first time AEGEE researched the impact the membership in AEGEE has on its members. These are the results:

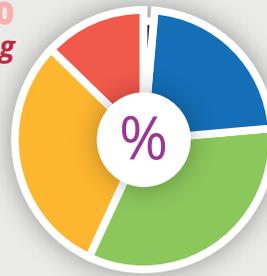
## AEGEE'S INFLUENCE

12.7%  
*Life-transforming*

22.1%  
*Awareness-building*

Life-Changing  
30.3%

Area-improving  
33.1%



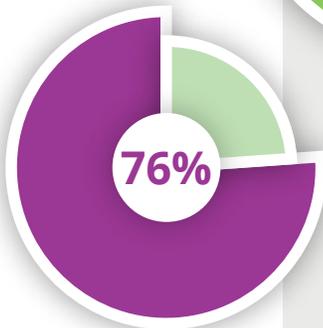
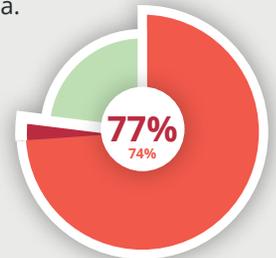
## AEGEEANS AND OTHER CULTURES

83% of AEGEEans say that because of AEGEE, they feel **more confident** working in intercultural environments

77% say that they feel **more respect** towards other nationalities, 74% say that because of AEGEE, they are **more aware** of stereotypes spread through the media.



» After I joined AEGEE I escaped from all my barriers and complexes, became very free and self-confident. «



76% say that AEGEE has encouraged them to imagine themselves **working in an international company, NGO or public body**

## EMPLOYABILITY

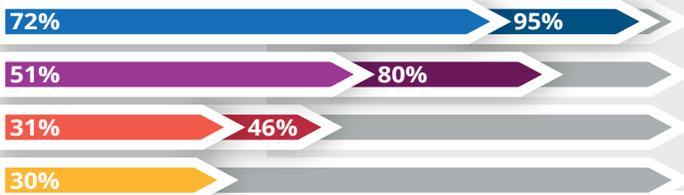
67% of AEGEEans **found a job within the first 3 months** after graduating.



## OUR ALUMNI

And our Alumni...

- 95% say that AEGEE has **prepared** them for the job market, with 72% saying that it has had an **substantial influence**.
- 80% of our Alumni have said that AEGEE has **helped them** to get a job, with 51% saying it has **helped them substantially**.

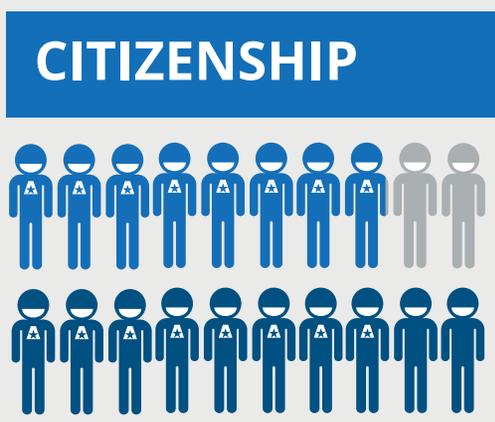


- 31% are **in a managing position**, 46% are leading a team.
- 30% have **worked in a European Institution** or a body closely connected to it.

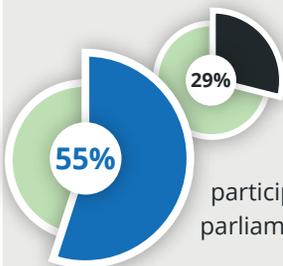
» AEGEE made me become a real active citizen. It helped me to define better my passions. It helped me to develop my competences and grow a lot. It increased my intercultural awareness. «

79% of AEGEEans consider themselves active citizens.

100% of AEGEEans consider themselves as Europeans, and 78% say that AEGEE has substantially contributed to this.



## AEGEEANS AND THE EU



Average participation of young people in the European elections: 29%

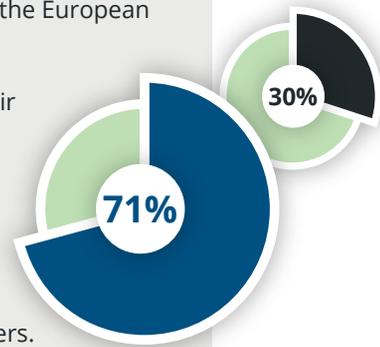
55% of eligible AEGEEans participated in the last European parliamentary elections 2009.

AEGEE has almost doubled the voting turnout for young Europeans among its members.

30% of the average European citizens say that they have a positive image of the European Union.

71% of AEGEEans say that their image of the European Union is positive, with 19% saying it is very positive.

AEGEE has more than doubled the support of the European Union among its members.



## SKILLS DEVELOPED

The skills that AEGEEans develop most in AEGEE are



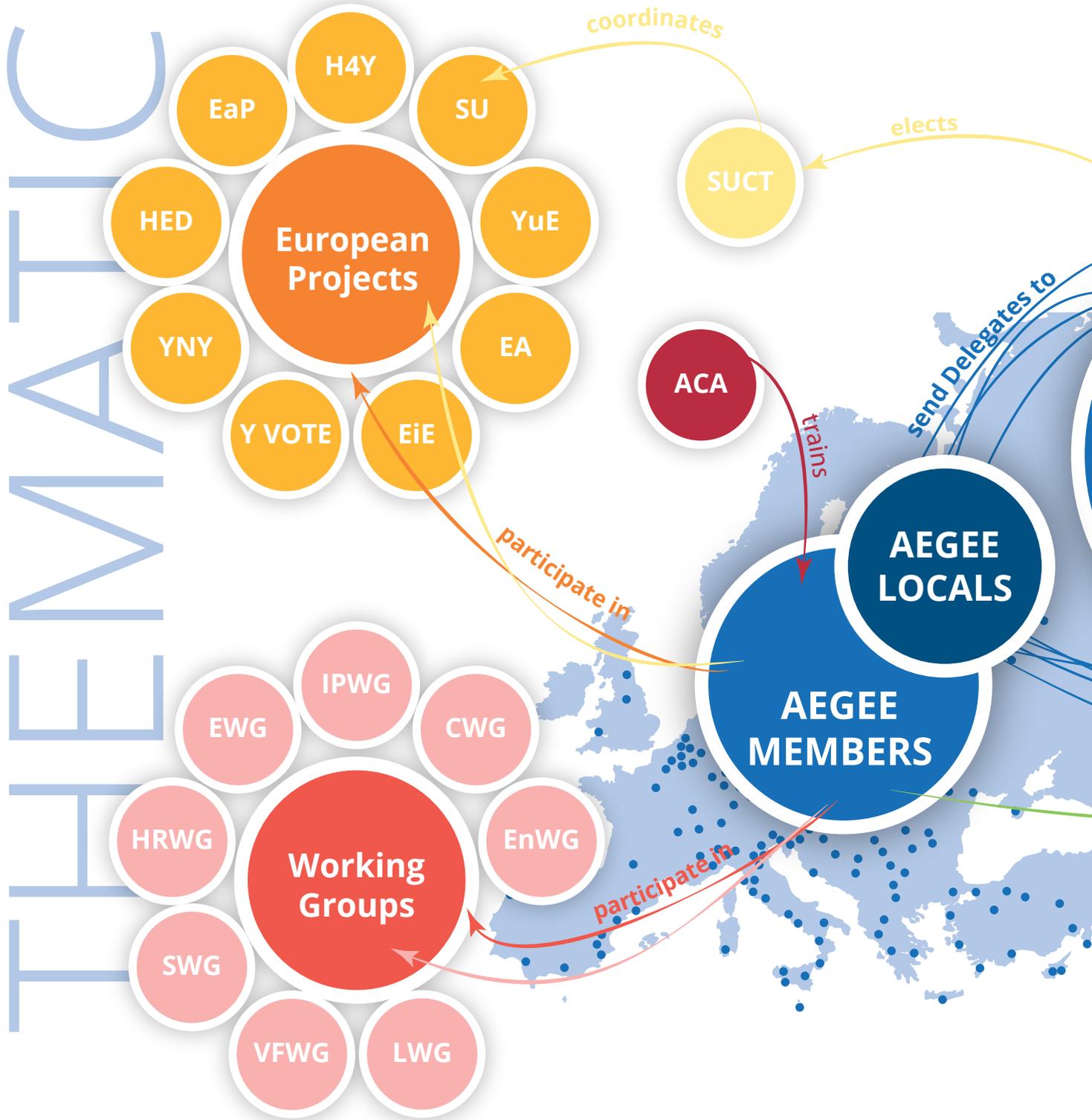
» AEGEE gave me the confidence to apply for a semester studying abroad. And AEGEE gave me the confidence to travel alone.«

### SOURCES

AEGEE Impact Study 2013  
 Standard Eurobarometer Wave 78 2013 ([http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/eb/eb78/eb78\\_first\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb78/eb78_first_en.pdf))  
 Eurobarometer Post Electoral Report 2009 ([http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/eurobarometre/28\\_07/EB71.3\\_post-electoral\\_final\\_report\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/eurobarometre/28_07/EB71.3_post-electoral_final_report_EN.pdf))

# AEGEE's Structure

Benjamin Doll, AEGEE-Mainz-Wiesbaden





ADMINISTRATIVE

### Legends

#### EUROPEAN PROJECTS

- EaP - Eastern Partnership
- H4Y - Health4Youth
- EiE - Europe in Exchange
- YuE - Youth unEmployment
- HED - Higher Education Days
- YNY - YOUrope Needs You
- EA - EuroArab
- Y Vote - Y Vote 2014
- SU - Summer Universities

SUCT - Summer University Coordination Team

#### WORKING GROUPS

- CWG - Culture Working Group
- EWG - Education Working Group
- EnWG - Environmental Working Group
- HRWG - Human Rights Working Group
- IPWG - International Politics WG
- SWG - Sports Working Group
- VFWG - Visa Freedom Working Group
- LWG - Language Working Group

ACA - AEGEE Academy

#### COMMITTEES

- ACT - Action Agenda Committee
- CRC - Corporate Relations Committee
- EC - Events Committee
- HRC - Human Resources Committee
- ITC - Information Technologies Committee
- PRC - Public Relations Committee

#### COMMISSIONS

- Audit - Audit Commission
- JC - Juridical Commission
- MedCom - Mediation Commission
- NetCom - Network Commission

## AEGEE's projects

*Reaching a Goal Together*

### Eastern Partnership



The Eastern Partnership project aims to bring equal opportunities for youth from the EU and the Eastern Partnership countries. Main goals of the project in 2013 are promotion of political awareness and European values in EaP countries.

### Europe in Exchange



The Europe in Exchange project aims to bring all youngsters in Europe and neighbouring countries the possibility to take part in mobility programmes by informing the students and increasing the bilateral agreements among universities..

### Higher Education Days



The Higher Education Days project promotes discussions about different aspects of Higher Education in Europe among our members and local students, focusing on the implementation of the Bologna Process and the recognition of Non Formal Education.

### YOUrope Needs You



The YOUrope Needs You project empowers young Europeans to act as multipliers and go to high schools to spread the opportunities that Europe offers to young people under 18.

### Y Vote 2014



The Y Vote 2014 project aims to empower first time voters and students, encouraging them to participate in the European Parliament elections in May 2014 and giving them the competences to make an informed choice.

### EuroArab



The EuroArab Project aims to establish cooperation, mutual understanding, tolerance and peaceful connections between youth in Europe and in the Arab world by organising different exchanges, joint conferences and shared activities.

### Health4Youth



The Health4Youth project shows students how easy it is to have a healthy lifestyle, giving them the opportunity to learn about lifestyle influencing factors and enabling them to implement the gained knowledge.

### Summer University



The Summer University project comprises more around 80 individual summer courses all over Europe each year. It offers a mobility experience and an opportunity for cultural exchange and personal development for more than 2000 participants every year.

### Youth UnEmployment



The Youth Unemployment project tackles youth unemployment through a series of activities that will help young people to increase their employability. The project also advocates for the recognition of voluntary work and non-formal education as work experience.

## AEGEE's Working Groups

*Working Together in Europe*

### *Culture WG*

The Culture Working Group tries to learn more about stereotypes and common cultural values. We also want to learn more about the cultural variety in Europe, to discover and to develop a better understanding among the different cultures in Europe.



### *Education WG*

The Education Working Group aims to promote the importance of education in Europe through various education-related topics, such as student mobility, life-long learning, non-formal education....



### *Environmental WG*

The Environmental Working Group cares about the environment and the sustainable future of AEGEE and Europe. We raise awareness and organise activities related to environmental topics.



### *Human Rights WG*

The Human Rights Working Group aims for a more inclusive Europe, in which human rights are respected and people know what they stand for. It fights any kind of discrimination inside AEGEE and around Europe.

### *Language WG*

The Language Working Group is to spread language sensibility among AEGEEans. Our main project is the European Day of Languages, an action day focused in learning languages and about languages.

### *International Politics WG*

The International Politics Working Group aims to gather members with interest in what happens in the world and to provide a discussion platform for them, mainly through blog articles online and new debate platform, the AEGEEdebate site.



### *Visa Freedom WG*

The Visa Freedom Working Group provides information and support to the locals when dealing with visa issues, and also serves as a meeting point for those members of AEGEE who want to discuss mobility and visa issues.



### *Sports WG*

The Sports Working Group addresses physical activity through non-formal education. Sport makes it possible to address discrimination issues such as racism and homophobia among youth and also highlights the importance of a healthy lifestyle.



## Comité Directeur 2012-2013: “Dare to Change - Together We Can”

*Kathrin Renner, Vice President and External Relations Director of AEGEE-Europe*

What to write about a year where your whole life consists of a micro cosmos of seven people which at the same time are each other's role models and idols, nagging sisters and brothers, best friends, colleagues, travel companions, flatmates, and family? About seven personalities who are each of them visionaries in their own way, always ambitious and sometimes insecure, seven people who cannot have any distance from each other, seven people who share everything? At the end of the day, those seven people changed their life completely for a year because of the same reason: AEGEE.

### *What makes a successful team?*

We came to Brussels full of energy, impatient, mentally ready to take over. Even though we received valuable and indispensable knowledge from our predecessors it was hard to wait for the moment the Knowledge Transfer Period would be over and we would finally be in charge. When we published our activity plan, it was called ambitious. After 10 months, we can say that we have achieved 75% of it with two months of our term still to go. Most probably, by the end of the year, we will have fulfilled 90%, with some drawbacks on some objectives depending on the available infrastructure, for example. We believe this means we have been successful in our tasks. So what makes seven people from different cultural backgrounds, with very different characters and approaches to life, a successful team?

- We were lucky enough to share a common vision of what we wanted to achieve in our year and the AEGEE we wanted to see, a vision which worked as a light tower throughout the

year, a core to which we could always come back to. For the rest, compromises are vital, and we managed to compromise quite well.

- We were not afraid of challenging existing standards and thinking out of the box: even though we were building on what had been done by our predecessors (giving more educational value to Summer Universities, further improving our relation with the European Youth Forum, clearing out our archives, etc.), at the same time we were ready to question how things had been done in our organisation for years. Finding a balance between the two sides has not always been easy. We have achieved some of our biggest goals because of this: moving the head office to a new address, redefining AEGEE's identity, opening the Europe on Track initiative to non-AEGEE-ans and, in return, obtaining high quality film and photo material.
- We were flexible. During the year, a lot of unplanned events occurred. No matter if we refer to unexpected happenings in Europe and around the Network which suddenly requested our full involvement, e.g. the increased tension in the Caucasus Region; unforeseen challenges that came up when dealing with the old and the new house; or personal difficulties like a broken leg or a denied visa: we learned how to deal with the unexpected. During the team building sessions at the beginning of our term our main motto was “All you need is to flow” or “Be water, my friend”. We managed to adapt our flow to all the challenges which came along our way and eventually overcome them.



- We had people who supported us. No matter in which situation, whenever we asked for help from the Network, somebody was there to jump in, to advise us, give feedback, to carry boxes with us, to help us proceed with certain legal issues, to overcome IT challenges or do that last minute design for us, to cheer us up and give emotional support. We are deeply grateful for this support. Without it, the year would have been much harder and the results would have been much poorer.

### *Bringing AEGEE back to its roots: We're on the way.*

We are aware that our year was not perfect. We have learned and still have to learn a lot.

But we do believe that we achieved what was important to us as CD: bringing AEGEE back to its roots, a student and youth organisation which fosters intercultural exchange and brings Europe closer to its citizens, but also one which is involved in policy process, not afraid to make its voice heard and who is present at the frontline of the integration process.

A platform which enables young activists and visionaries to implement their dreams. We are not there yet, but we are on our way.

A lot of work needs to be done, and it cannot be done by seven people in Brussels. Luis, our president, once said: 'AEGEE has 13.000 projects.' Each of our members is an AEGEE project. And together, we can change Europe. We are looking forward to it, and are counting on you again next year!

### *Positions in the Comité Directeur 2012-2013*

<b>Luis Alvarado Martínez</b>	<i>President</i>
<b>Lucille Rieux</b>	<i>Secretary General</i>
<b>Anna Gots</b>	<i>Financial Director</i>
<b>Kathrin Renner</b>	<i>Vice President and External Relations Director</i>
<b>Beáta Matuszka</b>	<i>Network and Human Resources Director</i>
<b>Miguel Gallardo Albajar</b>	<i>Projects Director</i>
<b>Pavel Zborník</b>	<i>European Institutions and Communications Director</i>
<b>Madalena Sousa</b>	<i>Research &amp; Administrative Officer</i>
<b>Zsófia Komáromi</b>	<i>Communications Officer</i>
<b>Felipe González Santos</b>	<i>Policy Officer on Youth Participation</i>
<b>Armenak Minasyants</b>	<i>Policy Officer on European Integration</i>
<b>Mathieu Soete</b>	<i>Policy Officer on Sustainability</i>
<b>Eline de Graaf</b>	<i>Rapporteur on Social Inclusion</i>
<b>Lucia Sobeková</b>	<i>Rapporteur on Social Inclusion</i>
<b>Stephanie Müller</b>	<i>Rapporteur on Social Inclusion</i>
<b>Monica Riccio</b>	<i>Intern</i>
<b>Iván Suárez Castellano</b>	<i>Intern</i>
<b>Marcos Dosantos González</b>	<i>Intern</i>
<b>Michele Turati</b>	<i>Assistant for Data Analysis</i>
<b>Francesca Russo</b>	<i>Assistant for Data Analysis</i>

## Re-shaping the AEGEE Identity

*Lucille Rieux, Secretary General of AEGEE-Europe*

*Reflecting upon the identity of an organisation is a very healthy process which needs to be conducted regularly within any organisation, since the identity has to adapt itself to the moving environment.*

Since the start of the term of the current Comité Directeur in September 2012, it was decided to have the issue of the identity of AEGEE as one of our flagship initiatives. The objective was to break the silence on the topic, and encourage an open but framed dialogue among the Network in order to collect the opinions and the wishes of the members regarding the way AEGEE should be defined.

The problem with the AEGEE identity was very easy to detect: it is almost impossible for a member to explain in a concise way what AEGEE is, since all our activities seem to go into all kinds of directions.

### *Who We Are*

Therefore, the process had as its main aim, to clarify what the members want AEGEE to be, in order for all of them to have a core unified idea of AEGEE and ensure a consistency of the activities which are carried out at both local and European level.

The process started by focusing on our current situation and finding out who we are as an organisation.

In early October 2012 an online consultation was launched, which was followed by an open discussion during the Autumn Agora Budapest. This part focused on finding out what the members' opinion on the organisation is right now. What are the main problems and which are the elements we really cherish and want to keep? The answers gathered reflected the variety of understanding of the association and confirmed the need to re-structure what we are doing in a clearer way.

The second phase of the process was launched right after the Spring Agora Rhein-Neckar. It aimed at a clear definition of the direction we want AEGEE to follow and a clarification of the vision and mission of our association. More than 80% of the respondents agreed that AEGEE should have a vision of Europe, and that our mission should serve the ideal Europe we strive for.

### *Identity Meeting*

The results were intensely discussed during the Identity Meeting taking place in Brussels in July 2013. During this meeting, the Vision, Mission, and Means of Action of the association were clearly reformulated in order to answer the wishes of our members to keep a multidisciplinary association, reflecting at the same time our wish to have the strong, common line all our activities, both on local and European level, have to serve.

Moreover, further steps were defined during this meeting, since updating our identity was definitely not enough. The real difference, though, will be made after the implementation of that identity by our locals. In order to achieve it, we will need them to continue taking the ownership of the process by giving feedback and using the space for discussion at its maximum. We need to make sure that all the activities that the projects, Working Groups, and locals are planning contribute to the redefined identity. This will lead to a more democratic, diverse, and borderless Europe socially, economically, and politically integrated; a Europe who values the participation of young people in its construction.

## Bringing the AEGEE Look

*Kathrin Renner, Vice President and External Relations Director of AEGEE-Europe*



For years it has been under discussion, and it is finally here: a common visual identity for AEGEE, developed by the Public Relations Committee. From now on, all the AEGEE logos (both on local and European level) will shine in a fresh blue, which will be its main colour. Whenever necessary, it will be interspersed with a warm shade of red, lime green, cheeky purple and a close shade to golden yellow. This common visual identity for AEGEE has been chosen to make our organisation easier to recognise: not only will we share a common vision, common projects and a common spirit, but also a common look. Those five colours and their accents will identify us, and they leaving enough room for individual creativity and flexibility as well.

The development of the new look goes hand in hand with the complementary merchandise of

AEGEE-Europe, which was printed this year for the first time. The most popular one was clearly the fashionable and snugly AEGEE-Europe hoodie, which is multifunctional in chilly plenary halls, windy weather, and also suitable for long nights at the beach during Summer Universities. Many of our members were already spotted wearing it during our Statutory Meetings recently. Besides, for cold weather and early mornings, AEGEE has also developed its fitting accessory: AEGEE-Europe coffee cups.

Other merchandise ideas are on the table: a European passport cover, AEGEE-Europe pins, and AEGEE-Europe ties, among others. Discover the new AEGEE look at Agora Zaragoza!

## When Thematics Matter

*Alla Resheten, AEGEE-Kyiv & Mariella Rapa, AEGEE-Valletta*



AEGEE is a forum, a place where young people from all over Europe meet to discuss current issues in Europe. One of the biggest strengths of AEGEE is diversity, which means that every single person can find a platform for discussion on the issue which is especially interesting for them. This can be done by different means: a discussion inside a specific Working Group, by organising a conference or any other kind of event, even during a statutory event.

One of the most important moments of the year for every thematic worker in AEGEE are the statutory events, as this is the place where representatives from all the Network gather in the same place for four days. This is a unique opportunity to present the results of their work and come up with new initiatives.

If we look back on the last two Agorae, we will see that AEGEE is keeping an eye on current happenings in Europe. At Autumn Agora Budapest 2012 we saw an incredible amount of thematic

initiatives getting the official status of an AEGEE project. One of them was the EuroArab project, which focus on establishing co-operation between European youth and young people from the Arab countries and creating a platform for further co-operation. Also the Europe in Exchange programme was ratified as one of the projects of AEGEE, aiming to disseminate information about mobility programmes and other similar possibilities. The results of this project enable AEGEE to give a more concrete contribution to the developments taking place in our European society, particularly with regard to the Erasmus programme but also to other mobility programmes. Finally, the Health4Youth project got its official status as well. This project is a pretty new and quite unusual initiative for AEGEE. We are young and often forget that health is not something given to us by default forever, and we usually forget why it is so important to take good care of ourselves from the very beginning and to be in the good health. Being in good health gives

us more strength to make Europe a better place.

At Spring Agora Rhein-Neckar 2013 new life was given to a project based on the success of one of the biggest projects of the past in AEGEE - Y Vote. This time Y Vote 2014 will again focus on promoting participation of young people in the elections to the European Parliament providing an explanation as to why it is important to make your choice and cast your vote and which impact this will have on every single young person in Europe.

Apart from this, both Agorae have hosted panel discussions on several topics with experts in the field. Issues of the European identity, Bologna educational system and European Elections 2014 were tackled and deeply discussed.

The main thematic conference of AEGEE, the EBM in Valletta, was exclusively dedicated to the Future of Europe. AEGEE strongly believes that young people must take the bull by its horns and be the architects of their own future rather than waiting for policy makers, politicians, and anyone else, to design that future for us.

Several discussions on youth participation in civic society, the European identity, youth unemployment, youth mobility, the environment, and Euro-



pean integration took place. The participation of Professor Dr. James Skelly, as well as representatives from the UN and JEF, helped us to form a common opinion of what Europe should mean to us in the coming years, how we can build a stronger Europe, and how AEGEE members can



be the ambassadors for this vision.

More strikingly, the EBM in Valletta turned out to be quite inspirational and gave birth to many initiatives we will hear about in the future.

To conclude, we would like to quote Ernest Hemingway, who advocated that “the error of youth is to believe that intelligence is a substitute for experience.” Luckily, we are members of an association where we have tons of opportunities to build bridges between our acquired knowledge, different disciplines, and cultural experiences. We have the possibility to share our very own personal views and undergo very different experiences that shape us into what we actually stand for, and this leads us all to the same path within our association – attaining a vision for today’s youth, and promoting that vision across Europe.

## Towards a Stronger Policy Role for AEGEE

*Lucille Rieux, Secretary General of AEGEE-Europe*



This year, the Comité Directeur of AEGEE-Europe has their priority set on strengthening their advocacy work on issues that directly concern our members. With this objective, and in order to involve the Network as much as possible, the position of Policy Officer was introduced in the AEGEE landscape.

This position brings a small revolution to the structure of AEGEE, as until now it was the Comité Directeur who used to carry out the association's advocacy work. Our Policy Officers, then, deal with four broad fields, namely Youth Participation, European Integration, Social Inclusion, and Sustainability.

During this first year, a position two-fold has been developed. On the one hand, our policy officers have monitored the trends in European policies in relation with their topics, and have

kept the Network updated through articles and discussions with individual members or Working Groups. On the other hand, they have gathered the members' opinions on policy issues by organising physical and on-line consultations throughout the Network. To close the circle, they have prepared a position paper aiming at giving a direction for our organisation to follow in their respective fields.

This year was no other than a first step to see how to involve the Network in the policy field and raise awareness among the members of the importance to state our points of views. Next year we hope to see a greater involvement in order to shape the vision of the Network on issues which directly concern our members, and on which AEGEE can really make a difference by making its voice heard.

## AEGEE's Social Responsibility

*Maurits Korse, AEGEE-Enschede*

When we organise an AEGEE event we are used to taking good care of each other. We try to make each other feel at home, let strangers sleep in our own beds and arrange some awesome activities. And we all do this for little money because we believe that everyone should be able to enjoy the diversity of the Network.

Unfortunately travelling around Europe can still be very expensive, and if you are one of the unlucky ones who need a visa, the costs can run sky-high. And that is especially true in countries where the distribution of welfare is large and the income is low. This increases the threshold to take full advantage of the possibilities that AEGEE has to offer.

As a European network of students we should not only take care of each other's homes when visiting, but also enable each other to do so. Social responsibility does not start at your front porch: it starts at the other side of our continent. By supporting each other financially we can make our Network become a welfare community in which each members' opportunities are equally important.

That is why the Social Responsibility Fund was initiated this year. It is a fund that is meant for the people among us that are in need of cost reimbursements for AEGEE events the most. To make the fund fair and viable, applicants must meet several conditions and can only apply for visa, travel, and/or participant fee support.

The procedure and conditions can be found on the AEGEE-Europe website, and applying for support can also be done through the same webpage: <http://www.aegEE.org/for-members/social-responsibility-fund/>

## A New Head Office

*Carol Bello Marin, AEGEE-Alicante & Edouard Mougín, AEGEE-Lyon*

For AEGEE, the year 2013 has brought many great achievements. One of them is that our association has settled down in a new head office, located at Rue du Noyer, 55. This relocation within Brussels is more than simply changing from an old house to a new one with better living conditions for the members of the Comité Directeur and their guests. Could it be a first step into changing AEGEE-Europe's track?



Indeed, the head office is still on the ground floor and benefits now from the natural light coming from the garden. The other floors gather private rooms for the members of the Comité Directeur. Besides this, as a novelty, the rooms can host two AEGEE members at a time looking for temporary hosting in Brussels.

Closer to the European institutions, this new house will also simplify the representation of AEGEE and provide the possibility to invite partners to the house. Finally, more space is available to host meetings, especially in the attic—which will be renovated by the owner—. This large working space will bring new possibilities enabling more project teams and working groups to work efficiently, to support current and new projects, and to strengthen our own actions all over Europe.

When the former head office was left for the last time, lots of memories suddenly came back to our minds. Despite the nostalgia, the new head office will be a place full of wonderful new memories and success!

## AEGEE for Erasmus and Erasmus+!

*Eva Topali, AEGEE-Ioannina & Robert Martínez Carrasco, AEGEE-Castelló*

Erasmus is the most successful student exchange programme. Thanks to the programme, more than 230 000 students study abroad each year and more than 3 million students have taken part since it started in 1987. Still, how many of you actually know how it is connected to AEGEE?

In 2012 our most symbolic programme celebrated its 25th anniversary. However, as excessive as it may sound, Erasmus was, at a given point, paralysed and on the verge of collapse had it not been for AEGEE. For the record, Erasmus had been politically decided upon in a European summit in 1985, but it was put on hold for budgetary reasons. In 1985-1987, the students' association EGEE Europe (AEGEE's first name), stood as one of the main promoters and supporters of Erasmus.

At the beginning of 1987, political reasons were added to the Erasmus turmoil: Germany and the UK would only unblock the budget for the programme if France made the first move. AEGEE, conscious of the risk of Erasmus flopping, could only have one goal in mind: to convince and persuade the French president at that time. A few weeks later, and thanks to the impulse of EGEE, the European Council of Education Ministers adopted the Erasmus programme.

***In short: if the students of AEGEE-Europe had not taken a decisive step at that time, Erasmus may have been rejected by the European Council of Education Ministers.***



Our involvement within Erasmus did not stop there. Over the years, AEGEE antennas have been doing their best to promote and support Erasmus actions, providing language tandems, helping incoming students with accommodation or arranging trips to different cities, museums, and parties.

Recently, AEGEE took a stand again to protect the Erasmus programme starting a petition to ask the relevant EU bodies to secure funding for the Erasmus programme when funds for life-long learning programmes were put at risk. For AEGEE-Europe, the impact of that lack of funding would be significant, especially given that the European Commission's programme for the years 2014-2020 was no other than *Erasmus+*.

Erasmus represents a crucial investment in people, benefiting both individuals and society by contributing to its growth and ensuring prosperity. Indeed, AEGEE's contribution to the Erasmus programme has proved to be crucial in the past, very relevant in the present, and definitely, and it doesn't take a lot to foresee, will still be key for the next generations of Europeans.

## New Honorary Members of AEGEE-Europe

*Luis Alvarado Martinez, President of AEGEE-Europe*

During the term 2012/2013 the Comité Directeur of AEGEE-Europe decided to award its highest recognition award to two very special people within our organisation throughout its history, therefore adding two new names to the hall of fame of AEGEE-Europe.

These are Burcu Bercemen and David Stulik.

Burcu Bercemen was the President of AEGEE-Europe with the highest percentage of votes in the history of our association. She was also European Institutions Director of AEGEE-Europe 2005/2006 as well as Project Manager of the Turkish-Greek Civil Dialogue which is one of the biggest, most prestigious and impactful projects this association has ever had.

She was a Trainer of the AEGEE-Academy, giving many trainings to our members around the Network and inspiring new generations to take an active role. In 2006 she won the prestigious award of 'Young European of the Year' by the Schwarzkopf Foundation.

Burcu currently works as a freelance interpreter, as well as managing many different projects and initiatives on peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

David Stulik, originally from Czech Republic, was member and Vice-President of AEGEE-Warszawa in 1991/1993. He was one of the first AEGEE members who got accepted to the Central European University (CEU) when the prestigious institution opened. In 1993/1994 he was speaker of the AEGEE's East-West WG, in which he played a key role in AEGEE's expansion to the East.

David also worked for AEGEE one year in Brussels as Projects Director and Vice-President of AEGEE-Europe -1995/1996 as well as being in the



Coordination Team of the AEGEE project 'Find your Way' project.

In 1995 he was the Coordinator of the Case Study trip to Ukraine, the year when the first AEGEE antenna in Ukraine was established.

In 1997, when the prestigious award of the Schwarzkopf Foundation was created, David was the first young person in Europe to win the Young European of the Year award.

David is currently working in the EU Delegation of Ukraine.

Both Burcu and David have played an instrumental role in the development of this organisation. Therefore, we are extremely proud to have had them as members, and even more proud to be able to award them the highest of all ranks in AEGEE.

Since 1993 AEGEE has granted the title of Honorary Member to 16 Europeans.



## Les Anciens Coming Closer to the Network

*Koen Berghuis, AEGEE-Cluj-Napoca*

This year the Comité Directeur asked Les Anciens to become AEGEE's official Alumni organisation. With around 570 members, Les Anciens has already organised many activities, like reunions in Brussels and summer trips. At the last general assembly of Les Anciens in Malta, the decision to become AEGEE's official alumni network was approved unanimously, defining the exact role of Les Anciens after years of not having any official status.

Luis Alvarado Martínez, president of AEGEE-Europe, heralded the decision as an important step for AEGEE. "By having an official Alumni Network, the current generation will benefit a lot from their experience. Our intention is to use this potential to build strong partnerships for AEGEE, help and guide our members in entering the labour market or applying for cer-

tain positions, but also to make sure that our organisation does not forget its past. Les Anciens must be the one reminding us the great initiatives AEGEE did in the past and what the obstacles and strong points were back then."

Also the speaker of Les Anciens, Niels Hoffmann, was happy with the developments. "As Les Anciens, we have always felt being the alumni organisation of AEGEE. At the end of the day, we are no other than the former, most active members of AEGEE. We find it important to achieve the right balance in the relation with AEGEE, being cautious not being "too close" to them in order to give the new generation enough space and experience to shape AEGEE in the way they want."

## AEGEE's Patrons

*Patrons of organisation throughout the time.*



*László Andor*

Member of the European Commission (2012) for the "Study & Career Fair" at Agora Enschede



*Androulla Vassiliou*

Member of the European Commission (2011) for the "Summer University" project



*José Manuel Barroso*

President of the European Commission (2010) for the project "Where Does Europe End"



*Doris Pack*

Member of the European Parliament (2000, 2011) for the projects "Education for Democracy" and "Higher Education Days"



*Jerzy Buzek*

President of the European Parliament (2009) for the project "Where does Europe End"



*Giorgio Napolitano*

President of the Italian Republic (2009) for the project "Y Vote 2009"



*Pat Cox*

President of the European Parliament (2004)



*Eric Froment*

President of the European Rectors Conference (2002)



*Mikhail Gorbachev*

Former head of state of the Soviet Union (1998)



*Václav Havel*

President of Czech Republic (1996)



*Daniel Tarschys*

Secretary General of the Council of Europe (1995)



*Jacques Chirac*

Prime Minister of France (1986)



*Margaret Thatcher*

British Prime Minister (1986) for the project "Second European Students' Week"



*Francois Mitterrand*

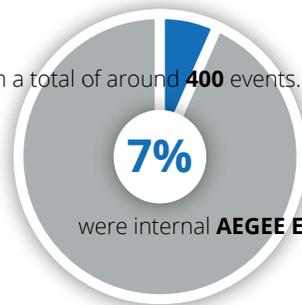
President of the Republic of France (1985)

## AEGEE's Partners and Supporters

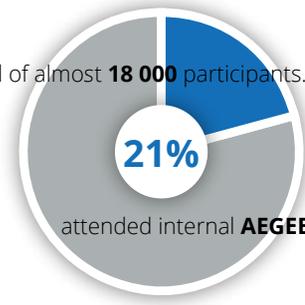


## AEGEE Events

From a total of around **400** events...



From a total of almost **18 000** participants...



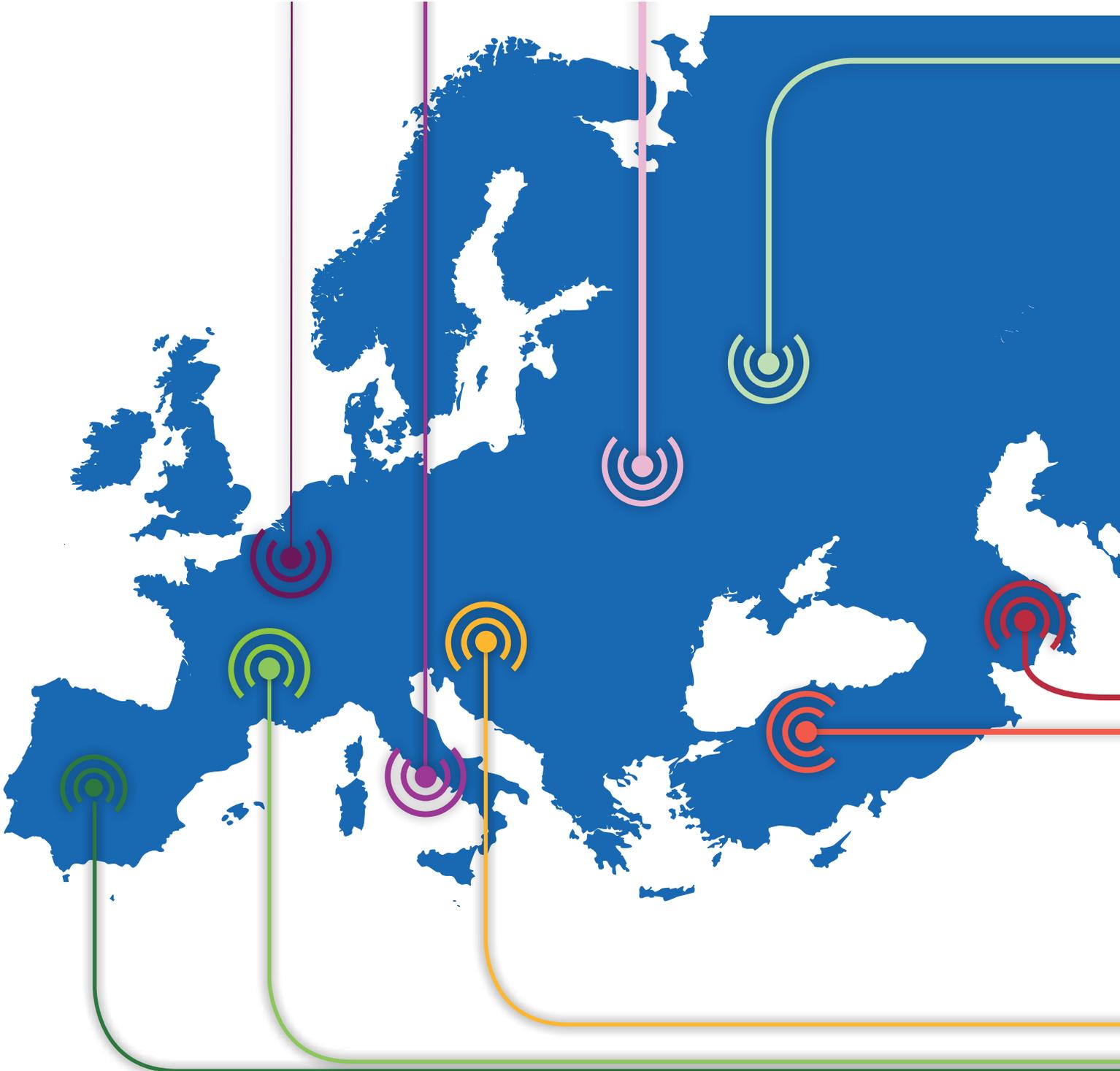
Two statutory meetings every year are the biggest gathering places for AEGEE members, besides a thematic conference where different European issues are discussed. Throughout the year promotional events are organised to attract new members.

	<i>Organisers</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Participants</i>
Oct 12	AEGEE-Bari	Let's Know AEGEE-Bari	30
Oct 12	AEGEE-Bratislava	Agora Pre-event: Brighten Your Horizon	30
Oct 12	AEGEE-Lviv	Pre-event of Agora Budapest: Fall in Lviv!	30
Oct 12	AEGEE-Maribor	Agora Pre-event: The Mystery Machine	35
Oct 12	AEGEE-Pécs	AGORA Pre-Event in Pécs: Brace Yourselves, Agora is Coming!	25
Oct 12	AEGEE-Sarajevo	Pre-event Agora Budapest: Sarajevo Time Travel	25
Oct 12	AEGEE-Voronezh	AEGEE-Presentations	35
Nov 12	AEGEE-Budapest	Autumn Agora Budapest	1000
Dec 12	AEGEE-Helsinki	AEGEE-Helsinki 20th Anniversary Event	35
Jan 13	AEGEE-Adana	Being AEGEEan	75
Feb 13	AEGEE-Treviso	Presenting AEGEE and its Values	20
Feb 13	AEGEE-Valletta	European Boards Meeting	350
Mar 13	AEGEE-Tbilisi	Green Tomato	30
Mar 13	AEGEE-Valletta	Info Sessions	35
Apr 13	AEGEE-Alicante	10 Anniversary AEGEE-Alicante	135
Apr 13	AEGEE-Catania	AEGEE and SU Promotional Days	100
Apr 13	AEGEE-Gliwice	Fairy of Student Organizations	50
Apr 13	AEGEE-Mannheim*	Spring Agora Rhein-Neckar	800
Apr 13	AEGEE-Salerno	Waiting for Summer University	70
May 13	AEGEE-Chisinau	Welcome to AEGEE Chisinau	35
May 13	AEGEE-Enschede	Cantus: Welcome to AEGEE	180
May 13	AEGEE-Las Palmas	MAMBO NO.5	30
May 13	AEGEE-Moskva	Info Sessions	60
May 13	AEGEE-Napoli	AEGEE Napoli 20th Anniversary	50
May 13	AEGEE-Zielona Góra	Student House Tournament	370
Jun 13	AEGEE-Çanakkale	AEGEE-Canakkale 10th Anniversary	100

\*The Spring Agora Rhein-Neckar was organised by seven different locals: AEGEE-Mannheim, AEGEE-Darmstadt, AEGEE-Frankfurt, AEGEE-Heidelberg, AEGEE-Kaiserslautern, AEGEE-Karlsruhe, AEGEE-Mainz Wiesbaden

## In the Spotlight

*Nobody of them wanted to be in the spotlight, but it happened. None of that was planned, but it happened. And when something is happening, we need to (re)act. Especially if it can change our paths.*



## From Russia with love: European Youth Claiming for Rights and Freedom of Speech



September 2012

*Luis Alvarado Martínez,  
President of AEGEE-Europe*

In the morning of the 24th of September AEGEE-Europe, through its president Luis Alvarado Martínez, participated in a flashmob-like protest denouncing the violation of freedom of speech and youth rights in Russia. The protest was organised during the opening ceremony of the 9th Council of Ministers for Youth of the Council of Europe, in Saint Petersburg, Russia.

Using masks as a symbol of these violations, around 20 youth representatives from International NGOs, together with delegates of several National Youth Councils (NYC) and other International Youth NGOs, stood up in silence wearing masks when Peter Matjašič, the president of the European Youth Forum, was reading his final speech. During his speech he spoke up for youth rights, freedom of expression, and anti-discrimination, especially in the case of LGBT rights.

The young representatives stood silently during the whole speech, while several youth minister nodded in approval, making it impossible for the Russian representatives to ignore the claim of European youth for freedom of speech and human rights everywhere.

AEGEE-Europe took part in this protest, as we believe that it is important to continue striving for human rights, and especially for youth rights. Each one of us should be given the liberty to express their views on the society they are living in, without fear of political persecution.

As a follow up of the Ministerial conference in Saint Petersburg, a Youth Rights campaign is currently being created with many of the International Youth NGOs and NYCs participating in Russia as well as with the support of the European Youth Forum and the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe. This campaign intends to make young people aware of their rights, as well as for pushing the topic of Youth Rights inside the Council of Europe's agenda.

AEGEE-Europe, among others, wants to bring back the discussions between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of all the countries of the Council of Europe about creating a Legal Framework for the Rights of Young People in Europe. To do this we launch the campaign [www.youthrights.eu](http://www.youthrights.eu) and call for the participation of every young person around the continent.



## Erasmus at Threat!

*October 2012*

*Kathrin Renner, Vice President and External Relations Director of AEGEE-Europe*

This year has been a decisive year for the Erasmus programme, since its future was negotiated together with the general budget of the EU 2014-2020. In October 2012, the European Parliament and the Commission announced that there was not enough money available for the current European cohesion funds in 2012 and 2013, including the well-known Erasmus Programme. It was the 25th year of the Erasmus programme, a moment where we should celebrate the powerful tool for the creation of a European identity among its citizens, and the funding of this exact programme couldn't be secured! Around 200.000 students were affected by the shortfall of 90 million euros, and especially for those who had planned to begin their semester abroad in the summer, the situation was unclear.

As a reaction, AEGEE launched a petition among its members and networks to call upon the Member States to cover the missing amount of money and make sure that also in the summer of 2013 students could enjoy their European experience. The immediate and big support, in parallel with initiatives by other networks and broad media attention to the problem, showed that the Erasmus Programme had really found its place in the heart of European citizens.

Finally, the Council and the European Parliament agreed on providing extra funds to balance the budget of 2012-2013, and also secured the funding for the academic year 2013-2014. It is important that Member States recognize the significance of the Erasmus programme, and this crisis has shown that young Europeans care deeply about it.

## Breeze of Change in Hungary

*October 2012*

*Beáta Matuszka, Network and Human Resources Director of AEGEE-Europe*

Hungary has been in the spotlight in the recent years, mainly due to its politics. Indeed, we have read about its media law, its freedom of press, the fourth amendment of its fundamental law, and different smaller but not less important decisions shaping the laws and thus the lives of people; and that not even going far back in time to list the issues that have arisen. These series of events unintentionally started to lead to the beginning of a substantial change on the general political attitude, especially among young people.

The influence of the historical political background has shaped the current political culture of Hungarians, and it can be clearly analysed in the past twenty years and beyond. Several studies have shown that the trust in the state and its politicians is remarkably low since decades. Still, the expectations are really high and the citizens do not feel as having their personal contribution to the system, something visible among Hungary's political attitude of all generations.

Different events and issues in the past months have started to redefine the idea of an active citizenship in Hungary and slowly change the attitude of its people. The ongoing severe cuts affecting many institutions and students on several levels of education served as a direct trigger, which activated and moved the new generation of young changemakers. In recent months many constructive discussions have started to take place and organisations have been born all over the country, since these young people want to take actions and actively shape their present and future – This generation is us!



## Young People Do Care!

January 2013

Monica Ratiu, AEGEE-Cluj-Napoca & Kathrin Renner, Vice President and External Relations Director of AEGEE-Europe

We often hear that young people are indifferent towards politics. However, the reason for the below-average participation of young people is not always disinterest, as it was witnessed during the Italian national elections.

40,000 young Italians living abroad were affected by a flaw in the Italian legislation since, in order to vote from abroad, Italians have to register for the elections submitting proof that they have been a resident of their host country for at least 12 months. For young people participating in mobility programmes such as ERASMUS and Italians abroad for professional or other reasons this meant that they had been practically denied their participation in the elections or at least forced to spend their own resources in order to cast their vote in Italy, as 12 months exceeds the duration of most exchange programmes or work contracts.

As a response, Italians all over Europe organised protests. In Brussels, AEGEE-Europe intern Monica Riccio was one of its coordinators. Despite the support of the European Commission, the Italian institutions failed to provide a last minute solution. Still, all over Europe, Italian students took steps to make visible that their vote would have made a difference: they arranged, among others, symbolic "Erasmus Elections", polling stations where people with an Italian ID could cast their vote.

In a modern Europe supporting mobility, no European citizen should be denied their right to democratic participation just because they use the opportunities the EU offers them for education and training.

## Meeting the Azerbaijani Institutions

February 2013

Miguel Gallardo Albajar, Projects Director of AEGEE-Europe

AEGEE-Europe pays special attention to the Caucasus region, and our organisation is always ready to support our antennae in their initiatives. We want our locals in those countries to grow strong so they can play an active role in the process of building up a stable democracy and to be one of the driving forces in solving the regional conflicts by establishing a dialogue among the different actors of the civil society in the area.

In this framework, AEGEE-Europe was invited to visit Azerbaijan in February and to hold several meetings with representatives of the Ministry of Youth and Sport of Azerbaijan, with NAYORA (the National Youth Council of Azerbaijan) and with the Azerbaijan Youth Foundation. Luis Alvarado Martínez, President of AEGEE-Europe, Miguel Gallardo Albajar, Projects Director of AEGEE-Europe; and Alin-Florin Calin, as Liaison Officer towards OSCE, represented our organisation and had the opportunity to explain in depth what AEGEE-Europe is, what its aims are and how we normally work to achieve them, together with the reasons why we have a contact in the city of Stepanakert.

Topics such as the candidature of Ganja as European Youth Capital and the situation in the area of Nagorno-Karabach were on the agenda. Extra attention was paid to the situation in the area of Nagorno-Karabakh including the status of our local group there, and the potential support of the institutions of Azerbaijan to our work, concretely to our Conflict Resolution initiatives.





## Youth for Democracy in Belarus

*March 2013*

*Miguel Gallardo Albajar,  
Projects Director of AEGEE-Europe*

Every year the European youth joins forces on the 18th of March under the "Free Belarus" initiative of JEF (Jeunes Européens Fédéralistes – Young European Federalists). AEGEE supports these efforts, fighting for more democracy in Belarus from the inside and place the media attention on the situation of this country. The date commemorates the elections of 2006, where President Lukashenko, who was in charge since 1994, was elected for a third mandate. These elections took place after a controversial referendum where the removal of the limitation for the President to run for more than two mandates was approved. Neither the legality of convoking such a referendum nor the legitimacy of the results were free of suspect.

The electoral processes in Belarus have been criticised on each occasion by the Organisation for the Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) ever since the first election took place back in 1995, although the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), usually considers them as according to international standards. These antagonistic assessments reflect the strong interest of external powers in the internal politics of Belarus. As a result, the citizens of Belarus suffer from the lack of freedom in many fields that are associated with a non-democratic regime.

AEGEE believes that a strong civil society is needed in Belarus as part of the change. We are aware of the difficulties that activists face in the country, and their hard work deserves huge respect. We support them by raising our voice with their message, in our countries and in the EU institutions, and also by contributing to their initiatives and activities on the spot.



## Protests in Turkey – the Last Drop?

*May 2013*

*Percin Imrek,  
AEGEE-Çannakale*

The government, who wanted to demolish a park in the city centre of Istanbul to build a shopping mall instead, faced the reaction of its citizens, who held passive protests in the park against this plan. The protests, however, were faced with a brutal police force, hence the riots.

It can be compared to a last drop in a full glass - the limitations on the alcohol consumption, the freedom of speech, eroding historical and significant buildings only to replace them with profit bringing ones, or the restrictions in fundamental rights and liberties of people. The reaction of the government on the peaceful, armless, harmless protest of people in Gezipark was the last drop, which turned into a massive riot. With the emotional backlog from the past.

The role of the social media cannot be underestimated. It made the mobilisation and the unity of people much easier, freer, without any restrictions. On the other hand, most of the Turkish national media avoided showing the news about the riots, broadcasting soap operas, documentaries, and sport news instead.

AEGEE tried to take part in it, along with the other organisations. Turkish AEGEE members mobilised and showed their reactions mainly by going on the streets to protest, and massively using the social media to inform people, both locally and internationally. With the European network Turkish AEGEE members have, they managed to make their European friends aware on what was going on in Turkey and why. Hearing the news from people that were actually there was very useful and important for AEGEE members around Europe in order to have a clearer and more objective overview of the situation.

## LGBT Rights in the Spotlight

May 2013

John Eikosidekas,  
AEGEE-Patra

LGBT rights are an ongoing subject around the world. But it was May, France's turn to be in the spotlight. After several discussions, protests, and support speeches that were long lasting to say the least, finally the population of France managed to conclude in OUI! to the legalisation of same sex marriage and rights.

This is an important step for France, making it the 9th country in Europe, and the 14th country in the world to accept LGBT rights in their legislation. This may bring joy to many, but still: there is a respectable amount of people who remain against it, even after the legislation passed.

AEGEE itself had many contradictions between its members. On the official Facebook page of AEGEE-Europe, the news of France was announced straight away. This post had many different opinions from either side of the aspect, and always from a different point of view. Both sides were mentioned with the opposed one specifying that it is because of their cultural and religious point of view they are not able to approve it. Although some may not be able to accept it themselves, it is a human right to be able to love whom you want to love.

It's everyone's right to love, no matter the gender they fall in love with. This is an accomplishment for the LGBT community of France. AEGEE supports diversity, thus their fight for their rights, for any LGBT community of any other country, to love, to feel, and just be human like everyone in the world does, anyway.

## Standing for Youth in Spain

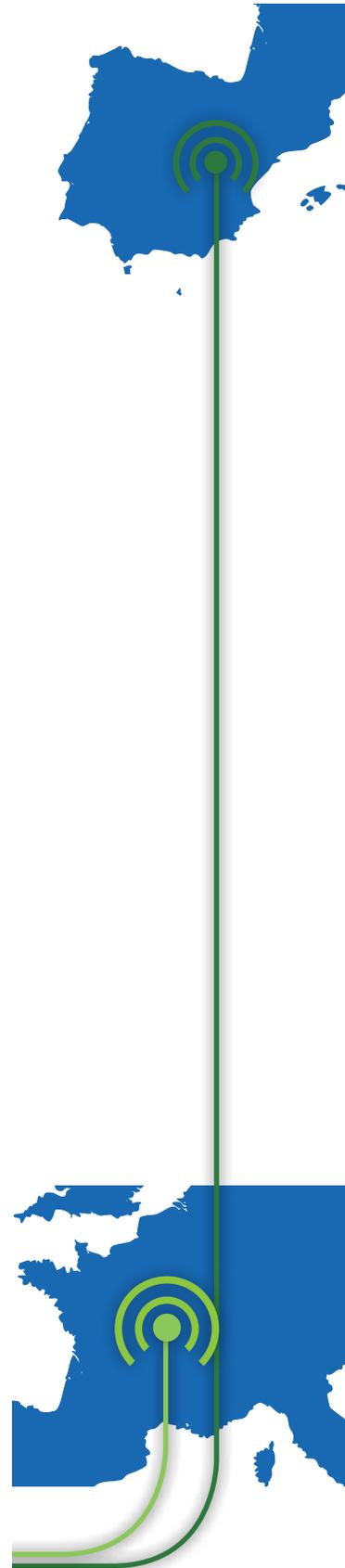
July 2013

Luis Alvarado Martínez,  
President of AEGEE-Europe

The Spanish Youth Council (CJE--Consejo de la Juventud de España-), being the only legitimate and representative space for Spanish young people to express their opinions and make their voices reach decision makers, is threatened to be closed by the Spanish Government. As core partner of CJE, AEGEE-Europe has denounced the attack to freedom of expression and youth rights of our members and the rest of the Spanish youth and has carried out different visibility and lobbying actions towards the EU institutions to make the Spanish Government change their decision and allow young citizens to have a space for dialogue, development, active citizenship, and full democratic participation.

Cooperation between CJE and AEGEE-Europe this year has been very strong, as AEGEE members coming from Spanish territory have benefited to a great extent from many opportunities offered by CJE, like capacity building, advocacy, international experiences, learning opportunities, and chances to meet and discuss with a great variety of youngsters coming from other organisations and backgrounds.

The Spanish Youth Council is a platform of youth organisations formally set up by law in 1983. CJE strives towards achieving a plural platform so that the various ideologies and sensitivities which make up the Spanish youth organisation movement can work together and exchange ideas and experiences. Furthermore, they want to channel all the proposals, vindications, or claims made by their member organisations to the authorities, social partners, and mass media.



# Advocacy & Policy



Over the past years, AEGEE has become more and **more involved** in policy processes. Hence nowadays, a growing part of our work is dedicated to gathering the opinions of European students and **representing** them towards stakeholders through campaigns, lobby actions, conferences and membership in bigger advocacy platforms. In addition, we inform students and young people about the impact of European policies in their daily lives and all the opportunities European organisations and **policy developments** offer to them.

## When NGOs Come as One

Marko Grdošić, Liaison Officer towards European Youth Forum

In AEGEE we might think sometimes we are alone out there, but the truth is that Europe has many more student and youth organisations allowing young people to express themselves freely in various environments, depending on their student background, political ideals, or different social aspects. Many of these organisations, as well as national youth councils, come together in the biggest youth platform in Europe called European Youth Forum (YFJ / Youth Forum Jeunesse).

### *A united voice to be heard*

The YFJ gives youth organisations the possibility to speak together as youth representatives when addressing various stakeholders, and therefore make our voice stronger and better heard. Within YFJ, AEGEE has had a strong role for many years. We take part in most of the projects, present candidates for the working structures, work on development of European as well as internal Youth Forum policies, and attend statutory meetings regularly.

### *Our direct involvement*

In the last 12 months, AEGEE has increased its representation within the working structures of YFJ, starting with the election of the former member of the Comité Directeur of AEGEE-Europe - Mirosław Krzanik into the Board of the YFJ. Working on topics such as mobility and education (formal education), as well as the new generation of the EU funding programmes, - Mirosław is representing both AEGEE and YFJ in the European and global political field.

The Youth Forum has a two-year work plan which is being implemented not just by the Board and the Secretariat, but also by its Working Groups. AEGEE is a member of the Working Group on

Education, which focuses on validation of non-formal education as well as developing quality guidelines of Non Formal Education. This Working Group AEGEE is represented by Marko Grdošić, Liaison Officer towards the European Youth Forum.

In the last Council of Members of the YFJ, AEGEE was also elected member of the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe. This illustrates a perfect example of co-management between a political institution and the youth sector. This way, from now on AEGEE's voice will be heard on different levels through our representative Luis Alvarado Martinez. The Advisory Council works both on the political agenda of the Council of Europe as well as within the Programming Committee that allocates funds to civil society organisations. Last but not least, AEGEE also has a member within the Pool of trainers of the YFJ and participates in the Membership Growth Project. This project supports the development of human resources and membership of different member organisations through best practices and capacity building trainings.

Differences among the member organisations of the Youth Forum create its greatest values. The importance lies in bringing such a mixture of youngsters and defining clear common goals together. In the end, we all work for the same thing - For youth rights!



## AEGEE and the UN

*Chucky Bartolo, Liaison Officer towards UN*



Earlier in 2013, AEGEE launched a team of Liaison Officers to work towards better communication with the United Nations (UN). Bringing AEGEE and the Network closer to the inner workings of the UN will provide us with more platforms and opportunities to achieve our goals, as well as inspire us to create new projects and initiatives based on ideas supported by the various sectors of the United Nations.

The UN is divided into many bodies, each with a particular focus. The Liaison Officers' team was divided in order to allow more focused work when dealing with the different sectors, as well as giving the opportunity for more direct contact with the UN bodies themselves. This will also help to generate more accurate information and participation opportunities for the Network.

The team, which is comprised of 6 members from several AEGEE antennae, can be seen as serving a dual function. Not only does it bring the information and the opportunities offered by the UN closer to AEGEE and the Network, but also provides the opportunity to voice our Network's stance on issues dealt within the various platforms of the United Nations.

## Erasmus +

*Luis Alvarado Martinez,  
President of AEGEE-Europe*

*The EU Youth Programmes have been in negotiation for the last two years between the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Member States, and the Civil Society.*

After tough negotiations between the Member States and the European Parliament on the future Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) of the European Union for 2014-2020, AEGEE is very happy that young people have benefited, at least from a mobility and educational perspective, from quite a big increase in funds for mobility and youth programmes in the EU.

With the new Erasmus+ programme (before: Erasmus for All or YES Europe) the European Commission intends to merge the seven most popular programmes into one, to simplify the access to them for its citizens. Inside the new programme we will find the already existing and successful programmes of Youth in Action, ERASMUS, Leonardo Da Vinci, Grundtvig, Comenius, Jean Monnet, and the Transversal actions.

The new programme, which has been agreed upon under the Irish Presidency of the European Union, has been named after the highly successful Erasmus student exchange programme (EuROpeanCommunity Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students). The new framework will be built on this well-known and respected EU brand through a stronger focus on student and educator mobility, reform of existing overlapping structures, and greater co-operation in the field of education with non-EU countries.

AEGEE's role in the next few months will be to adapt to the new programmes and learn about their functioning, to spread the word to young people around Europe about the tools which the European Union provides youth activists and workers, and to create an impact in society bringing the European Identity to its citizens.

## EuroSD Starts its Revolution

*Anna Gumbau Martínez, AEGEE-Barcelona*

*The European Structured Dialogue project (EuroSD) has started walking after three days of fruitful discussion and cooperation between youth organisations in the city of Zaragoza.*

“START YOUR REVOLUTION!”. This was the encouraging motto that the organisers from AEGEE-Zaragoza cried out loud at the opening ceremony of the EuroSD conference.

45 representatives from different European youth organisations came to the Spanish city with the same aim: to discuss about social inclusion and to establish a European Working Group to cooperate and to bring the voice of young Europeans to the institutions and decision-makers.

*But, what is exactly the Structured Dialogue (SD)?* It is a process of consultations launched by the European Commission and the European Youth Forum in order to pinpoint the needs and concerns of young people from all over the European Union. The SD provides a platform for the European Youth Forum and National Youth Organisations to consult their members about a certain topic, discuss the answers, and state a joint position that will be transmitted to the European institutions.

The Structured Dialogue was launched in 2010, engaging youth representatives and decision-makers in discussions about youth unemployment and youth participation. The SD is divided into 18-month cycles, with each cycle focused on an overall theme that is decided among the Youth ministers of the European Union.

### *Social inclusion at the spotlight*

From the beginning of 2013, social inclusion has been the topic chosen for the third cycle of the Structured Dialogue, which will conclude in the first half of 2014 and will therefore embrace the European Union presidencies of Ireland, Lithuania, and Greece. In each of these Youth Conferences, youth representatives, policy ma-

kers from the EU member states, the European Commission, and the European Youth Forum will draft a final document to be sent to national governments and the European Commission.

Social inclusion is indeed one of the main concerns in the EU's agenda, as many countries are facing a dramatic situation that has brought a large number of young people to unemployment, and consequently, to an increasing social exclusion.

### *The first European-wide Structured Dialogue*

The Structured Dialogue is dealt mainly by National Youth Councils that conduct consultations in their own countries and work together in national Working Groups. The conference in Zaragoza, supported by the Youth in Action programme, brought the Structured Dialogue to an international level for the first time with almost twenty European youth organisations invited. For them, cooperation between international youth NGOs has been crucial for taking a common position and making sure that the voices of Europe's younger generation are heard.

A European Working Group was established in order to keep up with the work done during the conference, adapting the best practices that the National Youth Councils have made progresses with.

For the first time, young people will be consulted at a European level, with AEGEE and many other international NGOs raising the voices of the youth and struggling for them to be listened and heeded – Let the revolution start!



## Regional Youth Forum: Making Youth Voice Louder

*Laia Garcia Montufo, Liaison Officer towards the United Nations and  
Anna Nikoghosyan, Society Without Violence NGO.*

While hundreds of people were gathered in Istanbul's Gezi Park, fighting for their present day, in a neighbouring district 40 young activists from diverse countries were taking part in a meeting aimed at building a more decent life for youth in the future.

The Regional Youth Forum took place in Istanbul at the end of May 2013, and brought up to 40 young people from Europe, North America, Central Asia, and Israel. The participants were representing various youth organisations and networks working in the areas of youth health, women and gender issues, education (including comprehensive sexual education), youth leadership, and participation in decision-making processes. The Forum was organised by UNFPA Eastern Europe & Central Asia Regional Office (EECARO).

The main objectives of the this forum were to develop region-specific and action-oriented recommendations for achieving sustainable development, taking into account its linkages with

population dynamics —especially with regards to young people— to identify “burning” issues related to youth’s sexual and reproductive health and rights issues, and to draft recommendations on elimination of inequalities, promotion of social inclusion, and realisation of rights for youth.

The Regional Youth Forum participants reflected on Global Youth Forum Bali Declaration and translated the global recommendation into actions, considering that the regional context focused on three main themes:

- Population Dynamics and Sustainable Development.
- Families, Sexual and Reproductive Health over the Life Course.
- Inequalities, Social Inclusion and Rights.

As a result of this two-day meeting, a Recommendation Document representing youth vision and development priorities was jointly developed, focusing on the above mentioned subjects. This document, together with the input from



## Calling for a Co-management for Young People in Europe

*Lucille Rieux, Secretary General of AEGEE-Europe*

On the 5th and 6th of June 2013, the Comité Directeur organised a conference in the European Parliament in collaboration with AEGEE-Bruxelles/Brussels. 40 young leaders from youth organisations gathered in order to discuss the possibility to implement a system of “co-management” for young people within the European Institutions. This project was born from the observation that participation of young people within the decision-making process of the European Union is rare and that there is no space given to directly contribute.

### *But, which model should be used to ensure their participation?*

“Co-management for young people” refers to a model where young people are directly involved in the process of decision making on topics which concern them, namely youth issues. It means that governments and youth representatives will sit together in order to decide on the political and strategic priorities of the youth sector. This system is quite rare, and has only been implemented by the Council of Europe so far. After two days of discussion, the participants proposed the implementation of a body within the Youth Unit of the European Commission, through which young people could be directly involved in the decision making process of youth policies. Such a step would be a clear sign by the decision makers that they want to take full advantage of the valuable contribution of young people acting as active, responsible citizens who think that this expertise is necessary to draft policies on youth.

an on-line platform and the national consultations, was presented in the regional conference “Enabling Choices: Population Priorities for the 21st Century” held in Geneva on the 1st -2nd of July 2013. The Conference did recommendations on future policy actions, synergies with the post-2015 UN Development agenda, and how to effectively implement gender equality and empowerment of women measures as well as those for adolescents and youth, the core of sustainable development.

Achieving the objectives of the Regional Youth Forum was not an easy task. However, participants ended up planning and structuring how to use the international community’s pressure and direct it in a more beneficial way to the youth. The methods used were diverse, the short-term objectives too, but eventually all these actions lead to the same long-term result – establishment of a free, equal and democratic society where every individual equally possesses and fully enjoys all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

## Youth Work Recognition - Make it Count!

*Alexandra Belanova, AEGEE-Moskva*

Youth work and voluntary activities contribute to the development and empowerment of society and its members. The first-hand experience, skills, and knowledge acquired through it can be quite competitive and complex. Nonetheless, for a long time, the importance of youth work and its impact has constantly been underrated. At present, the youth sector mobilises and involves many part-timers, volunteers, and promising young people in its projects. But so far there was no joined strategy and well-established policies tailored to validate the informal qualifications obtained.

Eventually, on the 26th of November 2012, the Council of the European Union endorsed a Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal learning, marking the beginning of greater recognition of youth workers. The main aim is the certification of learning outcomes gained in non-governmental organisations or on a voluntary basis. This should provide a transparent framework for recognition on a larger scale and better conditions for mobility and applicability of the acquired skills. Re-shaping the role of youth work will be based on a European Credit system for Vocational Education (ECVET system) and carried out by means of the Europass, Youthpass, and European Skills Pass generated to consolidate the achievements of young people besides formal education and full-time jobs.

The campaign has just undergone its initial stages to success. The consortium of partners is made up of AEGEE together with four other or-

ganisations under the coordination of the Youth for Exchange and Understanding. All the members are involved in a project called "Certification of the Qualifications of the Youth Workers in NGOs", where AEGEE-Europe takes responsibility for maintaining a pan-European database containing details and basic information on youth organisations and youth workers.

We talked with one of the youth work recognition specialists, Madalena Sousa, who kindly agreed to give us an interview and share some ideas on the future of this field.

**Key to Europe:** *Madalena, could you tell us about your youth work-related experience?*

**Madalena Sousa:** I am used to say that I am a product of the youth work. From the very early stages in my life I have been in contact with the associativism, taking advantage of the sporting offers and vacation programmes, as a volunteer, as a board member, and since 2009 as a professional. Since April I have been working on the Project "Certifications of the qualifications" with AEGEE- Europe, where I have acted as a researcher in the related topics.

Generally speaking, youth work is the field that provides opportunities for young people to shape their own pathway throughout life where education and policy walk together, where the problems of the youth work reside.

**Key to Europe:** *What about the youth work recogni-*

tion framework, has it already been created or is it a long way to go?

**Madalena Sousa:** The Europass and the Youthpass came to reinforce this recognition. While the Europass is a document that allows people to present skills and qualifications in a clear format and is recognised by most sectors, the Youthpass is a tool which can require an interaction between the participant and the context, and face greater difficulty being recognised outside of the non-formal circuit. The framework on Youth Work has already been established, but, as a field, it is in a constant development.

**Key to Europe:** *Could you name the most important advantages of youth work and what role it plays in our ever-changing world?*

**Madalena Sousa:** I would say that the main advantages of youth work are giving visibility and an answer to youth's needs, alongside with following the trends of society.

By and large, youth work and its recognition can create opportunities for empowering young people in order to have a say in decision-making processes by becoming active citizens and gaining confidence making their expectations come true, stimulating peer-education, and learning by doing. Above all, "the main objective of youth work is to provide opportunities for young people to shape their own futures" (Peter Lauritzen, Council of Europe).



A young woman with light brown hair tied back, wearing a black knitted scarf, leans out of a train window. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred train platform.

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# Personal Development



AEGEE has a wealth of experience in Non-Formal Education. Therefore, providing **learning opportunities** for the development of our members is one of our most important aspects. Through participating in training courses and workshops and also **active involvement** in the organisation, our members improve their competences such as leadership skills, communication skills and team management, which will be **useful** for their future lives.

## Improving our Future

*Fabian Brüggemann, AEGEE-Düsseldorf & AEGEE-Köln*

Europe seems to be in great times of crisis. This is what we hear every day, what we get told by people around us, by the media, the Internet, everywhere. This is how it feels. A situation like this might reduce the confidence of today's youth of Europe. It might limit possibilities and choices. Let's go two years back in time and look at Laura, a 23 year-old student from Spain, who feels limited by this situation. She is a student who is not confident about the future, but rather scared of what it will bring to her and today's youth of Europe. Today's youth of Europe, that is all of us. What can be done to give us a choice again, to strengthen our capabilities and competences? What can be done in order to make us strive for something and enable us to get where we want to be? What can we do to acquire the skills we need for this?

The best approach is to get active and to do something ourselves, in order to grow and learn. It is all about the people, and this is something that we, in AEGEE, have already realised and live already, something that is in our culture. We create the drive and the skills for the young students of today. AEGEE is a student organisation with very diverse members in terms of nationalities, study subjects, interests, age, and backgrounds. And it is not just about diversity, since we use that diversity to teach each other valuable skills! AEGEE gives trainings to its members. And these trainings are mainly done by the members of AEGEE themselves. Both parties – the trainers and the participants of those trainings – profit immensely from this: both learning new skills and attaining very valuable experiences.

AEGEE has a wide range of trainings, from local trainings courses – to teach the basics of our association – to European Schools, which focus





on a certain topic such as Public Relations, IT, Fundraising, and Project Management. Since the participants come from all over Europe, topics such as intercultural skills, language skills, and communication are always implicitly part of these trainings as well (if they are not explicitly the topic of a session, anyway). In order to ensure a good quality of all these trainings, AEGEE created a body inside the organisation in order to make sure that an overall strategy and good trainers were always at hand: the Academy of AEGEE. The Academy consists of a pool of trainers with a wide variety of disciplines.

Recently, the focus is more and more put towards self development, as the first edition of the Self Development European School in Utrecht shows. At our general assemblies, this topic gets much more into focus: next to the mentioned basic skills, such as public relations and project management, a lot of workshops and trainings deal with the “soft side”, such as healthy living, storytelling, presentation skills, and improving those soft skills by using methods of improvisation theatre by a concept called “improve yourself”. But AEGEE even goes beyond its own organisation: being a driving force behind trainings which are jointly organised by several international youth organisations, AEGEE empowers and trains students from all over Europe.

But AEGEE even goes beyond its own organisation: Supporting and promoting trainings like the ‘Leadership Summer School’ and ‘The Arc’ (training and coaching for leaders in youth organisations), future leaders of Europe are trained and inspired. Coaching is a big part of these trainings and very much supports the participants. The aim of coaching is to broaden the perspective, to give more flexibility and give them more options

### *continue... Improving our Future*

to make a choice. And this is exactly what we need! By this, AEGEE helps to empower and train students from all over Europe.

But what does that mean for Laura? Actually, it makes a huge difference to her! She joined a lot of trainings in AEGEE, and decided to become a trainer herself afterwards. By this, she made a lot of valuable experiences. She realised that different cultures can learn from each other and can work together by having a positive impact on each other. More importantly, she experienced that diversity is something to cherish, something good, something that teaches you how to overcome prejudices and stereotypes. Next to all those learnings, she experienced a very positive atmosphere, an atmosphere where she was encouraged to try and aim for her goals!

Quite a few of our members stay close to the association after they have finished their studies and remain members for a bit longer than their student life. They are professionals in their area, and love to give back their knowledge and experience to a younger AEGEE generation. In this way, the valuable knowledge acquired in their professional life is given to the students. Most of the members of AEGEE are not native English speakers. Still, all its trainings and workshops are given in English, implicitly improving the language skills of the participants and at the same time making them lose their fear to speak in front of others. Public speaking in AEGEE becomes something quite common for its members, especially considering that some of the conferen-

ces host up to 1000 participants. Presenting the results of a project in front of such an audience is a very valuable and interesting experience!

Laura learned to make her point clear, to debate, to discuss, and to stand up for her values. She improved her skills, which also helped her to find a job she wanted to have. She works in an international team now, and can use the things she learned inside AEGEE. By now, she even acts as a multiplier for a united Europe, talking to friends, family, and colleagues. She speaks in favour of Europe, and is at the same time able to take the opinions of others into account while staying open minded. Having made all these experiences, she learned to trust herself and her ideals and therefore is able to overcome difficulties if necessary. She uses her skills for a bigger, common goal: a mutual understanding for a better Europe. Might it be with promoting the values of a united Europe to very euro-sceptical people, who do not see that big picture, or just in general by improving the environment and the society she lives in. The training experiences she had in AEGEE helped her feel more like an active European citizen. Laura does feel empowered and believes that she can actually make a change.



## Non-Formal Education

Lucille Rieux, Secretary General of AEGEE-Europe

AEGEE is one of the biggest non-formal and informal Education providers in Europe for students, offering a structured space for learning and developing on a personal and professional level. However, the recognition of the education that young people attain outside of the formal education system, like in youth organisations, for example, is still not taken into account and accepted for what it is worth. Indeed, society and even the labour market, do not really give value to all the learning that one can get by being active in a youth organisation, like being able to deal with intercultural teams, lead a project or deal with responsibility and pressure. Even though those are competences which are clearly needed in the labour market, there is a gap of understanding of what non-formal education can offer.

For this reason, AEGEE, through bigger platforms like the European Youth Forum and EUCIS-LLL, calls for a better recognition of non-formal education. The European Union has decided to tackle this issue and to work towards recognis-

ing various learning pathways, not just formal education but also non-formal education and informal learning. In the context of crisis we live in, the latter need to be taken into account, since what matters in general is the competences people have. Thus, at the end of December 2012, the Council of the European Union approved a recommendation [1] to its Member States, urging them to develop national mechanisms to validate non-formal education and informal learning, namely that one person could be able to claim a qualification for all the learning they may have acquired as a consequence of a previous work experience, or, in our case, thanks to volunteering in a youth organisation. This is a first step towards a more holistic approach of education, where learning exists not only in formal settings. AEGEE is aware that there are still a lot of challenges to overcome in order to change the mentalities and structures of society and give non-formal education its full recognition, and will continue working toward this direction.

[1] COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of the 20th of December 2012, on the validation of non-formal and informal learning <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2012:398:0001:0005:EN:PDF>

## 25 Years Developing Through Cultural Exchange

Hara Kogkou, Summer University Project Manager 2010-2012



Most of our members start their path in AEGEE with a Summer University (SU). Truth be told, the very first day this journey begins no one can imagine their following days, or even better, their years to come! One arrives – without knowing what to expect from this Summer University, only to find out later that they were unaware of all the possibilities that exist across Europe, about the opportunities waiting to be grasped.

More than 25 years have passed since the first ten Summer Universities took place around Europe in 1988. In these 25 years the association has learnt, and keeps learning, what it takes to organise 80

SUs a year, how it is for young adults to enter a small multicultural society, to meet people from countries they haven't been to before, all from a cultural background that is unfamiliar to them

But, what makes a Summer University so unique, being one of the cornerstones of our organisation?

As its name suggests, the Summer University is a course that takes place every year during summer and lasts between one and two weeks. It includes activities that range from purely academic, such as intensive language courses, to intercultural dialogue, and it is organised by young volunteers willing to offer an amazing cultural experience – and not just that - to young people

from all over Europe. Its aim is to learn how to live together and, despite cultural, historical and maybe even political differences, to feel equal, sharing the same values.

During a Summer University, several learnings arise among the people involved. Communicating in a foreign language seems to frighten a

lot of them as it has not been included in their daily life until that very moment. Still, the more involved you get, the more comfortable you feel in communicating in the languages you speak and also in new ones that seem to be very thrilling when listening to

them from your foreign friends! Learning the basics of a new language starts with the necessary "Good morning", "goodnight" or "how much does this cost?", and to feel independent standing on your own feet in the new country. A cultural difference between ethnicities is another issue, but especially after the so-called European Night, where participants have the opportunity to present their country from a cultural point of view, they seem to be rather small as the similarities between different cultures surface.

Strong competences like project, team, and time management are developed by the organisers throughout the year of the SU's preparation. Due to the nature of the Summer Universities that are being held in cooperation with locals from cities

» In 26 years  
1881 Summer Universities  
with 53184 places  
were offered «



in different countries, they also learn how to cope and work with people from other cultures, resulting in the creation of an amazing team spirit! This way, Summer Universities provide a unique way of living Europe for young people, creating a new generation of young Europeans each year.

Organisers learn how to react fast, how to work in a team under pressure, and how to manage the time properly in order to have their tasks done successfully. Tasks include, among others, raising funds and getting sponsorships to provide as much as possible to the participants with the lowest possible fee, public relations with the local media and institutions to promote the actions and the cooperation of the local AEGEE-antenna, information technology for the creation of the webpage, an incoming responsible dealing with visa issues and handling pre-SU questions, etc. The latter, for instance, enlightens them not only in a practical way but also in the sense that it reminds them that visa freedom is not to be taken for granted and since difficulties always go hand in hand.

People spend two weeks of their life with other people they have never met before, people that they might not be friends with in their real lives just because they appear not to have a lot of things in common. Nevertheless, they spend their time together, sharing the same facilities and experiences only to realise that they can handle situations better than they thought, that people have more to show than what it is on the surface and despite the first image, there might

be people that can share the same feelings, fears, and thoughts. In these two weeks people acquire a sense of tolerance in a very practical way.

With seasons and years going by, surely there have been many AEGEEans who can relate to having personally developed during a SU. Summer Universities are well thought of as part of the identity of AEGEE for many reasons, being a true reminder of the Europe we want to have!

### *Impact and Skills gained during SU*



## Youth Entrepreneurship Enabling the Progress

*Alexandra Belanova, AEGEE-Moskva*

In many cases entrepreneurship is inevitably associated with the risky undertakings grounded on acquisitiveness or lust for financial benefits. But in fact it has more to offer. Youth entrepreneurship, as such, stands on the forefront, being mostly a hybrid of a business-related product capable of tackling serious problems as unemployment, helping people, and maintaining a better environment or facilities.

To set an example we can cite the Youth Un-Employment Project which is geared towards grappling with unemployment. Formed within AEGEE, it helps young people under the stigma of joblessness by fighting for increasing the recognition of non-formal education and voluntarily work correspondingly. It aims as well at raising self-awareness and the role of youth enterprises at their regularly enriching European Schools for Entrepreneurship. It calls on young people to collaborate, to stand against the odds of decreased employability, and to create their own startups.

But this project is not the only chance to give new ideas and startups a go. One of our AEGEE fellow members Wessel Reijers (AEGEE-Enschede) successfully gave it a shot at the world-wide student platform for social entrepreneurship named Enactus. Together with his team, he proved that social entrepreneurship can be quite practical and capable of presenting workable decisions on unsolved problems. The team is running the platform for student portfolios DoToKnow ([www.dotoknow.com](http://www.dotoknow.com)) where students can take part in discussions and collaborate between themselves to enhance their academic performance.

The lookalike for Enactus can be found under the name of Startup Pirates, one-week acceleration programme for entrepreneurs-to-be where participants can present their ideas to investors

and gain the hearing and funding. We contacted Rafael Pires from Porto, one of the co-founders of Startup Pirates who shed light on the startups-in-the-making, see his answers below. Still, entrepreneurship can be not only a joint venture, so to give you better insight into entrepreneurial activities we also asked a member of AEGEE-Peiraias, Mike Szewczyk, to dwell on his escapades and how he went through thick and thin in this field of his own bat.

**Key to Europe:** *Rafael, could you elaborate on member's results? Have they created their own successful startups?*

**Rafael Pires:** Well, the most developed and successful startup is Uniplaces. They have been selected for Startup Chile, closed the first investments round and created jobs. We also have Foodzai (a community that allows you to connect with home chefs in your city and discover their culinary specialties), that has been selected to the final at Le Web London, one of the biggest technical conference in Europe, and Startup-bootcamp in Berlin, both the best acceleration programmes in Europe.

**Key to Europe:** *What about you, Mike? You are an experienced entrepreneur, could you tell us about your projects?*

**Mike Szewczyk:** In 2011 we created an informative website about strikes and means of transportation in Greece, called ApergiesBlog. In fact, I just filled the gap in the lack of information about the upcoming strikes in Greece because people didn't know where to search for trustworthy and updated information, how they can use the means of transportation. What I have learned from ApergiesBlog is that if you search for something



and you cannot find it, you should create it.

Some weeks after coming back from the second European School of Entrepreneurship I decided to compete in a startup simulation. The idea was called YouNew. It was a searching engine, using lots of complicated algorithms, with the aim of helping people change their lives (house, love, job, health, etc). We took the 4th place and won a cooperation with Microsoft, worth 50,000 euros. After winning, we tried to further develop it, but in the end it didn't work out. If you want to become a successful entrepreneur, you have to be prepared for things not working.

**Key to Europe:** *Rafael, which niche in the market the participants try to break into?*

**Rafael Pires:** That's a tough question because we don't have a clear pattern. Something common in all of them is usually the use of technology. What we see as a trend is the increasing interest in social entrepreneurship. We already had two programmes focused only on delivering social impact. For example, our last programme, taking place in Curitiba, was quite generic. Still, two of the six ideas presented were society-related. Curiously enough, they both became the big winners. Apart from it, we also see people trying to find ways to bring companies and universities closer and make the recruitment process easier, ideas on 3D printing, and mobile apps.

**Key to Europe:** *Mike, do you have some particular projects in mind you want to work on?*

**Mike Szewczyk:** While thinking about my Erasmus preparations (i.e. finding home), an idea came to my mind – InstantHome, which gives the opportunity for both the owners of the house and people searching for a short-term house rental (e. g. Erasmus people) to come in touch through a system of auctions: the fastest way to find each other, maximising the revenue and minimising other costs.

I contacted my old friends; we formed a team and competed in a serious and quite a prestigious competition. We took the 4th place among 163 startups. For now we are working on the development of the startup, preparing for taking part in more business competitions and trying to get inside an entrepreneurship incubator.

To sum it up, youth entrepreneurship is a perfect example of how such issues as the unsaturated market, unemployment, and lack in innovations can be a blessing in disguise, as they can incite and call on active, ambitious, bright young people. What we can learn from it is that the world is a venture for changes. If you want to achieve your goals or change the world - make it your way and do not let anyone or anything put you off the rails.



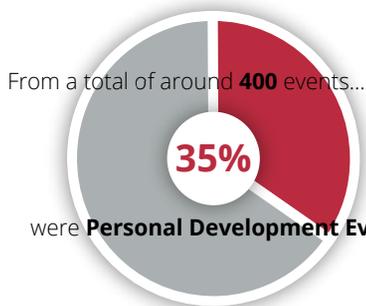
### Local and Regional Training Courses

### Network Meetings

In total around 60 local and regional training courses have taken place from July 2012 till June 2013 where in total have participated around 1500 people. Young people gained knowledge on AEGEE local and European level, its structure and thematic work and skills on such topics like human resources, public relations, finances, budgeting and fundraising, as well as presentation skills, events management and many more.

In the period of Autumn 2012 to Spring 2013, 18 Network Meetings have been organised all around Europe, involving around 1000 members. These NWMs gathered AEGEE members from the regions in order to strengthen the cooperation among them and discuss current issues in Europe. The NWMs support the development of our members and help them to work as multipliers in their local group.

## Personal Development Events



were **Personal Development Events**.



attended **Personal Development Events**.

One third of all AEGEE events are concentrating on personal development, whether it is on the development of language skills, presentation skills or other trainings related to skills and attitudes. AEGEE sees self-development as a very important topic for young people.

	Organisers	Title	Participants
July 12	AEGEE-Bamberg	Political Evening- The (Un)known Western Countries	35
July 12	AEGEE-Voronezh	Language Course of Russian	30
Sep 12	AEGEE-Mannheim	Vortrag: Deutsch-französische Europapolitik seit 1945	30
Oct 12	AEGEE-Coruna	Tandem Nights	120
Oct 12	AEGEE-Nova Gorica-Gorizia	PR European School 1	25
Oct 12	AEGEE-Santander	European School of Entrepreneurship	25
Oct 12	AEGEE-Valladolid	Renove 2.0	230
Oct 12	AEGEE-Athina	Workshop on Intergenerational Communication	25
Nov 12	AEGEE-Aachen	European School 1	25

	<i>Organisers</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Participants</i>
Nov 12	AEGEE-Ljubljana	Summer is Coming...Join the Dragons!	35
Dec 12	AEGEE-Patra	Pirates of the Ionian: Year XV	35
Jan 13	AEGEE-Çanakkale	Explorer Your Skills	50
Jan 13	AEGEE-Genova	Youth in Action Info Day	45
Jan 13	AEGEE-Katowice	PR with Coffee	60
Jan 13	AEGEE-Kraków	Let's Get Better	55
Jan 13	AEGEE-Kyiv	AEGEE Training Camp	55
Jan 13	AEGEE-Magusa	Be an Entrepreneur	55
Jan 13	AEGEE-Samara	Get Mobilized!	15
Jan 13	AEGEE-Stuttgart	Sprachcafe	50
Jan 13	AEGEE-Torun	Magic Winter Break	30
Jan 13	AEGEE-Zielona Góra	Public Speaking Workshop	270
Feb 13	AEGEE-Chisinau	Workshop „How to Organize an Event“	30
Feb 13	AEGEE-Lódz	Rock in Lódz	15
Feb 13	AEGEE-Sankt-Peterburg, AEGEE-Moskva	All over CartOOns	25
Mar 13	AEGEE-Cluj-Napoca	Education Action Days	70
Mar 13	AEGEE-Debrecen	IT European School	30
Mar 13	AEGEE-Delft	Language Tandem	120
Mar 13	AEGEE-Firenze	English Course	30
Mar 13	AEGEE-Ivano-Frankivsk	We Search for Talents	35
Mar 13	AEGEE-Kraków	“nGO HUMAN – European Human Rights Youth Exchange”	30
Mar 13	AEGEE-Kraków	Freshman's Survival	35
Mar 13	AEGEE-Treviso	Language Exchange	25
Apr 13	AEGEE-Adana	How to Make Presentation	40
Apr 13	AEGEE-Budapest	Re-migration in Action	45
Apr 13	AEGEE-Grodno	U-Active Forum 2013:Collect The Puzzle of Your Ideas	50
Apr 13	AEGEE-Leuven	Are We There yet? - A Journey through Europe's Immigration Policies	25
Apr 13	AEGEE-Lublin	Aktywator	170
Apr 13	AEGEE-Niš	Be Smart and Start	30
Apr 13	AEGEE-Treviso	A Crisis We Need to Know	35
Apr 13	AEGEE-Utrecht	Reliability of the Media	35
Apr 13	AEGEE-Europe	Training on Internet Governance	32
May 13	AEGEE-Beograd	Fundraising European School	32
May 13	AEGEE-Burgos	Tandem Programme	25
May 13	AEGEE-Catania	Promotional Event about Mobility Programmes	100
May 13	AEGEE-Enschede	Advanced Training Course	35
May 13	AEGEE-Kraków	Management Training Course	35
May 13	AEGEE-Moskva	Start up!	65
May 13	AEGEE-Odessa	Leaders of Tomorrow	45
May 13	AEGEE-Torun	First Negotiation Trial	40
May 13	AEGEE-Utrecht	Self-Development European School	25
May 13	AEGEE-Zielona Góra	UZ Factor	330
June 13	AEGEE-Kaiserslautern	Alcoholism in Europe	25
June 13	AEGEE-Nicosia	Socially Correct	75
June 13	AEGEE-Toulouse	Let's play with our Tongues: Promoting the Diversity of Languages	35
June 13	AEGEE-Europe	New Media Summer School 2013	32

## The Secret behind Spring Agora Rhein-Neckar

*Monica Ratiu, AEGEE-Cluj-Napoca*

For the first time in the history of the Agorae, the Spring Agora Rhein Neckar, taking part in the spring of 2013 in Mannheim, was organised by seven antennae: AEGEE-Mannheim, AEGEE-Heidelberg, AEGEE-Darmstadt, AEGEE-Frankfurt, AEGEE-Karlsruhe, AEGEE-Mainz-Wiesbaden, and AEGEE-Kaiserslautern, together with helpers from other German antennae and any other German-speaking AEGEE member, who were also welcomed to join the big helpers' team.

If we all know that it is hard to coordinate people from the same antenna, how could it be that of coordinating people from seven of them? It is all about the luck of gathering the perfect person for each job, a situation that matched perfectly the Spring Agora, as Benjamin Doll, its incoming responsible, stated. In total, during the event, the core team had 13 members from several antennae, who worked together as one, as seen during the event.

Not only did every member from the core team give their very best in each task during the Agora, but also, in order to make sure that everything would work as smoothly as possible, the team met uncountable times before it in order to get to know each other and divide tasks properly.

The facts mentioned above might be the recipe for success for every Agora-organising antenna. All the difficulties that arose during the preparation seemed to disappear when the smiles of the participants and the words describing the Agora started to come up.

One knows an event was successful when little stress is involved in it, as it was the case in Mannheim, where everybody liked what the organising team presented and when the core team confessed they were considering doing it again!

## Develop Yourself with the Academy

*John Eikosidekas, AEGEE-Patra*

The AEGEE-Academy (ACA) is a pool of trainers, but also coordinates trainings and sessions within a variety of subjects – European Schools of Fund Raising, Human Resources, Public Relations, etc. But this past year, the ACA added another type of training to its collection: the Self-Development European School (SES).

Starting as an ambitious idea of the trainers, it became a training to make each participant get to know themselves better, realise what type of goals they want to set for themselves, and finally motivate and empower them in order to realise what really matters in their lives and so that they can try their best to reach those goals.

This ambition was manifested in the beautiful Dutch city of Utrecht in May 2013, where 15 participants from around Europe came together, having the willpower to realise who they are, to develop themselves, and also to redirect themselves to their true goals. Five trainers from around Europe guided them through this journey they experienced, helping them wherever needed. Some of the techniques and sessions given by the trainers included self-realisation, goal setting, and empowerment.

Within one week, the transition of the participants was visible by them becoming more confident. They described the event in one word as "life-changing", and "eye-opener". Just imagine leaving for an event and returning as a whole different person! The ACA has decided to hold another SES in 2014, taking into consideration the extremely positive feedback received from holding the SES event in Utrecht and its constructive feedback, giving this pilot training an even better structure.

# Youth Participation



Active Citizenship and Youth Participation have been **core values of AEGEE** since its very beginning. We provide young Europeans with motivation, knowledge and tools of how to actively participate in their local communities, but especially in a **European society**. At the same time, we continue to advocate for more possibilities for young people to participate in **democratic processes**.

## Hope, Made in Europe

*Mathieu Soete, Ambassador of the Europe on Track project*

*1 month on the rails. 6 travellers returning just in time for Christmas. 30 cities from London to Istanbul and from Barcelona to Zagreb. Over 400 young people interviewed and thousands more engaged through social media. All numbers which give an idea of the dimensions of Europe on Track, but which utterly fail at capturing the importance of it — or the personal stories behind them.*



Can you imagine the cold which seeps through the slit between the windows of an ageing Serbian train in the middle of a snowy winter night? Or the warmth of the welcome extended by a perfect stranger to the three travellers showing up on the doorstep of her apartment in Bucharest? Or the smiles on the faces of the four young girls in Vienna wanting to give their opinion so badly that they would rather brave the snow storm outside than be turned away by campus security?

Some things have to be experienced in order to be appreciated. The same goes for most discussions and debates. Sometimes you just have to talk face-to-face with someone in order to understand their point of view. But most often, distance, and other practical barriers will render this kind of direct interaction impossible. This is why Europe on Track was developed; to create a direct link from the streets of Europe to the agendas of Brussels, bringing personal stories from European youth straight into European politics.

The concept is quite simple: (1) find six ambassadors who will travel across Europe with sponsored InterRail passes; (2) activate a network of local organisations to help with group discussions and accommodation; and (3) pick a couple of exciting talking topics on Europe's future. Topics like youth unemployment, education, and sustainable lifestyles; European politics, youth empowerment, and entrepreneurship. Topics which constitute the day-to-day reality of young Europeans, and determine their hopes for tomorrow.

From the very start this open approach has appealed very much to European politicians as well, earning the project high-level endorsements,

including from Members of European Parliament such as Marian Harkin and Katerina Batzeli. Ms Harkin on the central question: "Is Europe on the right track? We hear different voices when answering this question and I think you will enable us to listen to those voices."

And different voices we did hear from Erasmus students in the Netherlands, protesters in Austria, and from future EU citizens in Croatia to students in Turkey. All young people, all with their own story on the EU and their role in it, but all with a different story and different experiences and fears for the future. We interviewed them on the streets or inside their universities, with them over a local beer, or with them at their hosts on the way home.

So what did these six ambassadors tell us? Of course, a detailed overview of the results collected during this month on the rails is beyond the scope of this article. The focus is the focus of a dedicated results book. A number of elements though, which are present in discussions around Europe's future, can be introduced here as some of the key impressions: time, money, and infrastructure.

First and foremost, young people, especially students — find they have much more to offer than focus on what is in front of them by their surroundings and the need to graduate and find a job. This reduction of opportunities to develop a more sustainable future, to understand the complexities of global politics, or acquire some valuable skills for their professional experience which





ally help them find that perfect job once leaving university.

Second — and this should probably come as no surprise — they claim to lack the money. Many students work at least a couple of hours per week to help pay for their studies (leaving even less time for other pastimes), sustainable products and services most often still come at a premium price, and a large portion of internships offering them that invaluable first working experience — including those at many European and international institutions — are either grossly underpaid or not paid at all.

Third, many also cite a need for information. While this may sound strange in these times of constant and omnipresent information we live in, it should not. Exactly this continuous stream of data has young people longing for clear, concise, and reliable information, readily available, and cut to their needs and situation. Often it will take long internet searches to find information about this interesting internship or that grant for start-ups, only to realise the parameters or conditions are not adapted to their situation.

Obviously, young people don't only complain. Many are indeed anxious about their current and future chances on the job market, both at home and abroad. But they don't stand idly by however, and are further training themselves in youth organisations, on projects, or in non-formal education. Yet they are aware that even this is often not enough, for non-formal education is still insufficiently being recognised and it remains difficult for them to turn this invaluable experience into a meaningful job.

Within their means, young Europeans are doing their part; now they need politicians to commit as well. They need proper civic education preparing them for a life as full citizens and not merely as labouring consumers. Rewarding internships and starters jobs with a decent wage above subsistence level and the possibility to continue learning on the job. Financial incentives and support programmes adapted to the needs of young start-ups. A shift of subsidies towards sustainable products and services to make them more affordable.

The success of Europe on Track did not go by unnoticed; on May 9th it was awarded the Charlemagne Youth Prize. At the ceremony European Parliament president Martin Schultz captured the essence of the project, saying "[it] connects young people throughout Europe both offline and online, giving them the opportunity to express their views and making an original contribution to European integration." Also MEP Harkin recognised this, when she said that AEGEE is "strengthening representative democracy by backing it up with participative democracy."

In addition to being the ultimate proof that AEGEE knows how to develop, execute, and promote qualitative projects, the Charlemagne Youth Prize demonstrates Europe on Track's external relevance and importance in these difficult times. Now it is time for an equally great follow-up; internally with a next edition of the project but also externally, making sure the voices of the young Europeans involved in the project are being heard and inform policy-making adapted to the hopes and needs of youth.



## Welcome, Croatia!

Anita Kalmane, AEGEE-Ogre

*New opportunities. Shared values. Common future. Those and all other important words were said, felt, and discussed at the beginning of the summer 2013, when Croatia became the 28th member state of European Union (EU).*

The last EU enlargement happened in 2007 when Romania and Bulgaria became new EU Member States. It took six more years to open the doors for yet another member – this time the Balkan country Croatia.

### *Opportunities for everyone*

A week before the enlargement, and thanks to the European Commission (EC) in cooperation with AEGEE-Europe and other youth organisations, around 200 young people from all over Europe met in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, to celebrate, talk, and discover more about Croatia and the EU. No wonder around half of the attendees represented different AEGEE locals, giving an opportunity for most of them to experience Croatia for the first time in the conference “Croatia in the EU - Strengthening Ties in Youth Cooperation”.

Nevertheless, it was not only a one-time opportunity for them – it was the beginning of endless opportunities between Croatia and other EU countries. Antonija Parat, a member of AEGEE-Zagreb and the Network Commission of AEGEE-Europe, responsible for AEGEE antennae in and around Croatia, reveals her thoughts about this opportunity: “I would like to think of this as an opportunity, an opportunity for Croatian people to experience and learn new things and to strengthen their European identity, an opportunity for the EU to show in this crucial period that it is still relevant and still worth joining, and an opportunity for other countries of the Western Balkans to follow Croatia’s footsteps, to learn from Croatia and to share experiences.”

The conference gathered various speakers from European institutions and non-governmental organisations, including Sandra Petrović Jakovina,

one of the newly elected Croatian Members of European Parliament (MEP). Being 28 years old, she is also one of the youngest MEPs in the European Parliament (EP). Next to her stood Claus Giering, Head of Unit, DG Enlargement, EC; Peter Matjasic, President of the European Youth Forum, and other relevant figures. The main focus was on the possibilities and benefits for youth in Croatia and the changes in the mind of youth after the 1st of July 2013.

As Tommy Alexander Lund from JEF Denmark said after the conference: “now we have 4,4 million new people joining our family, 4,4 million new voices to enrich and enlarge our debate, 4,4 million new identities that will join us in creating a better future for all of us and 4,4 million new potential friends that we can truly call mutual friends and citizens of Europe”.

### *What's next?*

The European Parliament (EP) elections are coming up, and already next year the Croatians will have their second chance to elect their representatives in Brussels (the first time they were elected for the time left till the elections). Both AEGEE and other organisations will focus not only on the EP elections as such, but especially pay attention to Croatia, educating both the newest country that will be voting and the young voters about the difference their decision can make. As Marko Grdosic, former AEGEE-Europe President and current Liaison Officer towards the European Youth Forum (YFJ) explained, it will be time for Y Vote 2014.

**Welcome home, Croatia – and let's celebrate our future together!**

#### Key facts

**Capital:**  
Zagreb

**Currency:**  
Croatian kuna (HRK)

**Population:**  
4,4 million people

**Official language:**  
Croatian

**Declaration of independence:**  
1991

**AEGEE antennae:**  
AEGEE-Zagreb,  
AEGEE-Zadar

## Y Should You Vote?

*Roald van der Valk, Communications Manager of the Y Vote 2014 project*



Why do we vote? This is a question that everyone knows how to answer, or at least should know how to. Whenever this question is asked, the answer will most likely include big terms, like democratic duty. However, the response is a lot different when the question is changed to “Why should I vote?”. Turnout statistics suggest that young people are finding it increasingly hard to answer this question for themselves.

This is where the Y Vote 2014 project comes in. This project aims to get the youth involved in the European Parliament Elections and encourage them to vote, including a large amount of actions in order to achieve this goal. It will start with the organisation of youth conventions where topics that are relevant to the youth will be discussed. The conclusions from each of these conventions will be collected and turned into a Youth Agenda

that AEGEE will use to present the youth opinion to the EU institutions.

Furthermore, the Y Vote 2014 project will include bus tours through Croatia, Spain, and the UK. With these tours, we will be able to reach people locally and promote voting directly. The project will also include the creation of a voting guide, with which young people will be able to get a clear view of the way the EU works and how they can vote when they are abroad, as well as the political parties involved and what they stand for.

These are just a few of the things the Y Vote 2014 project will carry out. With these activities, and the enthusiasm of AEGEE, we will definitely have a great impact. We invite you to follow us on Facebook and Twitter, attend the events and, most important, to make sure that you are heard in May 2014.

## Youth Rights.Now

*Chucky Bartolo, Liaison Officer towards UN,  
member of the content team of the Youth Rights Campaign*



The topic of rights and liberties has always been an important issue, and we have often heard a lot of talk about basic Human Rights, democratic rights, and so on. But did you know there are rights specifically for young people?

In April 2013, a campaign spearheaded by AEGEE-Europe was formulated in order to take a stand for Youth Rights. The main message was simple: It is time for Youth Rights to be recognised and respected, as every young person should be able to live youth to its fullest.

Together with the help of countless contributors via on-line platforms, 13 organisations met in Strasbourg to formulate a campaign that focused on three main aims. The first was to raise awareness among young people, as well as society at large, about the fact that Youth Rights do exist, as well as what these rights entail.

The second aim was to get our message, as young people calling for our rights, onto the Policy Makers' agenda. Here, apart from making them aware of these rights, the campaign seeks to encourage a legally binding framework protecting them. Once properly addressed, they will become widely known and respected.

The final aim was to strengthen the voice of young people, as well as youth organisations, within the Council of Europe's Member States, as well as all of its structures.

Still, all of these aims cannot be carried out by the organisers alone, so everyone needs to get involved. Get all the information you need – on the rights themselves, as well as how to participate – at: [www.youthrights.eu](http://www.youthrights.eu).

Click.Share.Act.Now

## Youth Participation Events

From a total of around **400** events...



were **Youth Participation Events**.

From a total of almost **18 000** participants...



attended **Youth Participation Events**.

More than 2000 young people participated in AEGEE events on youth participation. These events raise their awareness on their responsibility as citizen and on their possibilities to participate in society, motivating them to become active themselves.

	<i>Organisers</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Participants</i>
Oct 12	AEGEE-Toulouse	25th Anniversary of Erasmus Program	150
Nov 12	AEGEE-Mannheim	Debating Day: the Western Balkan states Entering the EU	25
Nov 12	AEGEE-Mannheim	In the End what Counts it's Me	25
Nov 12	AEGEE-Yerevan	Armenia Model EU Conference 2012	120
Dec 12	AEGEE-Kraków	EuroArab II - "Two Cultures, One Goal - the way to Democracy"	35
Dec 12	AEGEE-Ogre	Involvement in Non-Formal Education for Young People	50
Dec 12	AEGEE-Yerevan	Youth Participation in Elections: From Eastern Partnership Countries to International Experience	65
Jan 13	AEGEE-Debrecen	YOUrope Needs YOU	120
Jan 13	AEGEE-Kyiv	AEGEE Local Trips: Youth Participation	45
Jan 13	AEGEE-Mannheim	Visit of Demokratieforum panel discussion	30
Jan 13	AEGEE-Napoli	Youth in Policy Making Processes	35
Feb 13	AEGEE-Alicante	USE-IT	20
Feb 13	AEGEE-Burgos	Burgos me pone Morcillote	30
Feb 13	AEGEE-Maastricht	Lecture and Debate "Europe and the European Union"	65
Feb 13	AEGEE-Nova Gorica-Gorizia	Erasmus Tutoring	50
Mar 13	AEGEE-Brescia	European Talks	100
Mar 13	AEGEE-Cagliari	Formazione Lavoro ed Europa	330
Mar 13	AEGEE-Palermo	Let's Walk Together!	35
Mar 13	AEGEE-Peiraias	Day of Voluntarism	85
Mar 13	AEGEE-Siena	Talking about NGO and AEGEE to Students	70
Mar 13	AEGEE-Valencia	Opening AEGEE: Volunteering Possibilities	50
Apr 13	AEGEE-Ferrara	European Talks	50
Apr 13	AEGEE-København	Royal Copenhagen	35
Apr 13	AEGEE-Kraków	EuroArab Youth Entrepreneurship Forum	45
Apr 13	AEGEE-Magusa	EU Info Point is Here!	20
Apr 13	AEGEE-Sofia	Conference on the Higher Education System in Bulgaria	100
May 13	AEGEE-Bialystok	Debate about Cooperation of Young People in Europe.	55
May 13	AEGEE-Kayseri	European Day	140
May 13	AEGEE-Nicosia	Democracy for the People by the People	75
May 13	AEGEE-Sofia	Get Lost in EU!	50

# Bridging Europe



The nature of our Network, with activities spanning a distance **from the Caucasus to Madeira**, makes it inevitable to deal with **regional differences** in the European continent. Besides cultural differences, one of the big challenges we face are the **different opportunities** young people in- and outside the EU have. We facilitate the platform for young people to meet and discuss, we provide them with information, and we continue to advocate for more opportunities for Europeans not living in the EU. A special focus is the reconciliation in the Caucasus Area.

## Borderless Mobility - Myth or Reality?

*Anna Gots, Financial Director of AEGEE-Europe*

*The nature of our Network - reaching far beyond the borders of the European Union - makes it inevitable for thousands of our members to deal with visa restrictions whenever they want to go abroad.*

The recently proposed "Directive of the European Parliament and the Council on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, pupil exchange, remunerated and unremunerated training, voluntary service and au pairing" might bring an improvement and is the next important step in making borderless mobility a reality for young people in Europe.

### *Why aren't we there yet?*

In most cases, the fact that a non-EU citizen obtains a scholarship, a PhD placement, or is elected as a board member of an international NGO in the EU is not yet a guarantee of reaching the new destination on time.

The problems usually arise already during the visa application process, with visa costs being hardly affordable for people in certain Member States and application processes lasting for several months.

It doesn't get easier when reaching the place of studies or traineeship: the procedure of obtaining a residence permit takes another several months, which means that the person cannot travel from the destination, is not eligible to work there and often cannot ensure the practical continuation of the studies or research programme.

The reason for these problems is that the existing directives are not clear or binding for the Member States, which leads to inconsistency in their interpretation and the treatment of third-country nationals.

### *Which positive changes will the new proposal bring?*

For the first time, the directive also includes remunerated trainees and au-pairs. The period of time within which the applicant receives a response regarding their application will be defined, and a reasoning for the decision has to be provided in writing, together with an explanation of the rights of appeal and proportionate visa fees. Another important improvement will be the enhanced intra-EU mobility for students and researchers.

The proposal allows students and researchers to stay within the territory of the EU to identify work opportunities for a period of 12 months after the finalisation of their studies or research.

Finally, it becomes binding for the Member States that any applicant who fulfills all the conditions set out for admission will have to be granted a long-stay visa or residence permit.

### *Room for improvement*

Knowing the reality of the groups targeted by the proposal, we believe that the proposal itself is a big improvement, but we can definitely suggest further improvements, such as the abolishment of visa fees, the definition of a time limit for an answer in case of appeal procedure, the extension of intra-EU mobility trainees, and an automatically granted residence permit together with the corresponding visa.

The first reaction of the European Parliament has been to embrace this proposal and suggest similar improvements.

The current situation gives us the motivation to keep following the process and express our voice whenever needed until the directive is implemented in 2016.

## Eastern Partnership Project: Dream Big, Achieve More

*Alla Resheten, EaP Project Manager*

*Four years have passed since the Eastern Partnership Programme of the European Union was initiated. What has been achieved within this time? What are the positive changes, we, as young people, can feel already now? And how has AEGEE managed to promote European values all around Europe?*

2012 was the year for the European Union to evaluate the achievements of its European Neighbourhood Policy and in particular the cooperation with its Eastern neighbours. Within the last three years all six countries have implemented a number of required reforms, worked on improving the democratic process, made steps towards economical cooperation and most of them are currently in the process of negotiating Association Agreements. On the other side, in the light of the economical crisis which is on the mind of every single European nowadays, the possible enlargement is raising a lot of questions and doubts. However, as long as youth as the moving force of the positive changes believes in the need of the integration and the need of equality – we will achieve what we believe in!

Within the last year the AEGEE Eastern Partnership project has been working in the following areas: democracy, human rights, and conflict resolution.

### *Focus on Conflict learning*

One of the most successful thematic events of 2012 took place in Oviedo, Spain. For a week in September, 25 young Europeans gathered in one place to learn about existing conflicts in Europe, about different nature of conflicts and ways to overcome it. Many of us have heard about the war between Russia and Georgia, or the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, but not everyone is aware of where these issues come from. In AEGEE we meet people from different parts of Europe on a daily basis, and it is essential to know our background story in order to understand our particular behaviour. Following this project, a few initiatives were started focusing on conflict resolution and cultural similarities within diffe-

rent nationalities. As a result, we can consider that the issue of existing conflicts in Europe is a topic which needs to be brought to the public, as we should be aware of what is going on in our neighbourhood.

### *Focus on democracy and human rights*

The majority of our activities focused on human rights and democracy issues. With our activities, we have covered topics such as European integration, democratic development, recognition of human rights, and youth participation.

After many years AEGEE is back to its agenda of an active involvement in election observation missions. As a first try in this field AEGEE sent an observer to the parliamentary elections of Ukraine which took place in October 2012. Luisa Marino, who went to Kyiv with an observation mission, was impressed by the hospitality of people working on the poll stations. At the same time, though, she noted a lot of flaws in the organisation of the elections. As a next step for our involvement in observation missions we have joined a promotion campaign for fair elections in Georgia and Azerbaijan in autumn 2013 initiated by the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, and we are looking for various possibilities to send our observers there.

In spring 2013 we organised two successful Youth in Action projects. One of them was hosted by AEGEE-Köln and focused on the recognition of human rights in the EaP region. The other event was hosted by AEGEE-Brno and dealt with EU integration questions such as the implementation of reforms in the fields of economy, democracy, and education. Both events gathered 70 partici-



pants in total from all over Europe, with different backgrounds.

It has become a good tradition for the project to support AEGEE-Poznan in their annual festival "I choose the East!" This year, a number of music bands, cultural activists, and just young people from Poland and all EaP countries gathered in Poznan for three days to promote cultural similarities of Poland and its Eastern Neighbours.

### *Focus on youth mobility*

Another big conference was organised in the European Parliament. This time, the focus was on youth mobility issues as a key to democratic development. This conference had two panels, discussing visa issues and progress in educational mobility. An interesting fact is that within the last two years institutional support for the cooperation with the EaP region has been increased in several times, which gives us the possibility to implement even more projects. Another positive change is that the amount of grants for Erasmus Mundus scholarships have been also significantly increased, which gives more young people the chance to enjoy the privilege of studying abroad.

As for the visa discussion, it was nice to see that both panels – institutional, and with representatives of NGOs – have agreed that visa barriers between the European Union and its Eastern

neighbours should be removed. By removing those visas or just simplifying the procedure not only would our culture and education benefit, but also the economy of both sides. The fact that we also have the support from the representatives of the Parliament gives us the inspiration to work harder and achieve more together.

Apart from organising different events, this project has played an active role in the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, an international platform which gathers different organisations working in all fields covered by the EU EaP programme in the EaP region as well as in the European Union, where we are members since November 2011. Starting from November 2012, an AEGEE representative acts as the coordinator of the Youth sub-group of the Working Group 4 "Connection between people". Being a member of this platform has given us a unique opportunity to join forces towards achieving our goal with other youth workers in the field.

In our project we truly believe that with the positive attitude, right motivation, and vision of the better future we can achieve our aims. And it is important to remember that we should never give up our big dream for a better Europe, as it is us and no one else who will make this dream tomorrow's reality!

## AEGEE-Europe Paving the Way for Conflict Resolution

*Miguel Gallardo Albajar, Projects Director of AEGEE-Europe*

AEGEE knows well that youth can be a key player in the process of conflict resolution. We have done it in several occasions with success, seeing how young people can ignite a process and provide a basis from where whole communities can overcome prejudices and hatred. We can progress where politicians get stuck, because we are free of constraints and we will succeed at finding a common language.

### *Back on track*

After some years of little activity in the field of peace and democracy in Europe, AEGEE has recently invested once again more resources to it. The interest of the whole Network in projects such as the Election Observation Missions is growing, and there was already a first opportunity for AEGEE members to participate as observers in the elections in Ukraine in October 2012. AEGEE-Europe plans to develop these projects in the close future and offer more possibilities for our members to participate. We firmly believe that there are not many better opportunities to learn about how exactly democracy works than these, while showing at the same time a strong support from the European youth to the democracy in those countries where election standards are not guaranteed.

During this year several initiatives have focused on conflict resolution, promoted by different bodies of our Network. Workshops were prepared by members of the International Politics Working Group at the Agorae, a training course on Conflict Resolution in Eastern countries was organised by the Eastern Partnership Project along with AEGEE-Oviedo (supported by the Youth in Action programme), and a Conflict Resolution Meeting organised by AEGEE-Baku in February 2013.

### *Special attention on Caucasus region*

Most of these activities set the focus on the Caucasus region, as it is an area where many conflicts are still alive. For this reason, AEGEE-Europe always keeps special attention to what happens in those three countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. For an organisation such as AEGEE, which promotes active citizenship and participation in building up a democratic society among young people, these countries are always a challenge. With a frozen conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan creating tension in the region since 1999, and the Russian invasion of the Georgian territory in 2008, peace can never be taken for granted in the area. Moreover, recognition of Human Rights is advancing slowly and there is still a long way to go until these countries can enjoy a stable democratic system. AEGEE wants to be one of the partners in their journey back into the Europe they belong to.

This complicated situation is the best motivation for AEGEE to develop a strategy for long-term work in the region. We will continue supporting the vibrant activity of our local groups in the Caucasus, on topics such as the value of culture and heritage, the promotion of active citizenship, and participation in society. At the same time, AEGEE-Europe will foster any initiative that allows young Europeans to participate in the resolution of those conflicts, and we will promote setting up a common goal in order to achieve a bigger impact. A big project on Civic Dialogue in the Caucasus area, with youth leading the whole society of the involved countries towards peace, may sound as a dream for now; but we have already in AEGEE some experience in transforming dreams into real change.

## Let's Review Eastern Partnership

Ivan Bielik, Speaker of IPWG

In the middle of April there was a one-week conference, organised by AEGEE-Brno in cooperation with the Eastern Partnership project, for young people from various parts of Europe. The event took place in Brno, Czech Republic. The topic of the event was Eastern Partnership (EaP), which is a programme launched by the European Union to establish closer relations with its eastern neighbours, namely Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. Participants came not only from the EU, but also from all EaP countries.

The main objectives of the conference were educating young people about the programme, creating friendships among different nationalities and discussing the future of EaP.

A mix of nationalities and experiences from

inside and outside of the EU led to sharing different knowledge experience. The workshops provided mutual dialogue of participants about various types of problems from a political, economical, and social point of view.

As a result, new friendships between EU and EaP nationalities were created, narrowing the cultural gap between them.

Young people engaged themselves in topics related to the future of the Eastern partnership and problems of EaP countries. They created also their own solutions to these problems with the help of experienced trainers.

In the end, all participants left the biggest South Moravian city with new experiences, knowledge, and motivation.

## Bridging Europe Events

*Bridging Europe events are events with a focus on Eastern Europe, aiming to bring young Europeans from Eastern countries together with young people from the rest of Europe to get to know each other better and build bridges. Events in this category have educated almost 400 AEGEE members this year.*



	Organisers	Title	Participants
Sep 12	AEGEE-Oviedo	Peace Building in Europe	35
Oct 12	AEGEE-Athina	The Sunniest in Europe Meets the Sunniest in Caucasus	30
Jan 13	AEGEE-Moskva	Cartoons as Tutors	35
Feb 13	AEGEE-Bakı	Conflict Resolution Meeting	30
Mar 13	AEGEE-Dnipropetrovsk	Where Should We Go? EaP Round-table Discussion	25
Mar 13	AEGEE-Köln	Eastern Partnership: European Youth's Perspectives	85
Apr 13	AEGEE-Brno	EaP Countries on the Way to the EU Integration	45
May 13	AEGEE-Praha	Understanding: Exchange with Moscow	30
June 13	AEGEE-Passau	Georgian Evening	55

# Inclusion of Minorities



A strong, stable, and **equal Europe** can only be based on a coherent civil society. Certain minorities continue to be discriminated over the continent. AEGEE members have made it their mission to find remedies against this discrimination. Through bringing young people from different population-groups directly **in contact** with each other, **minds are opened**. Especially the defence and promotion of Human Rights has been an important topic this year.



## Borrowing Human Books

*Koen Berghuis, AEGEE-Cluj-Napoca*

Borrowing and having quality conversations with human books? Even though it sounds quite unrealistic, this was exactly what AEGEE-Debrecen put into practice.

Like in a real one, in the Human Library visitors can borrow books for a 40-minute one-on-one talk. The major difference is that books in these events are real people. The first ever Human Library was organised at Denmark's famous Roskilde festival. The "Human Library Project" has also been a part of the Council of Europe's youth sector's priority programme "Youth Promoting Human Rights and Social Cohesion" from 2003-2005.

Choosing the 10th of December as the international day of Human Rights to host the event, AEGEE-Debrecen organised their own Human Library. The visitors were given the unique chance to freely talk to diverse people: an abstinent alcoholic, former drug addict, a physically disabled, an NGO volunteer, a clergyman, a visually impaired person, and many others. Because of widespread stereotypes about some groups, discrimination is often present. This is why personal interaction, combating the lack of knowledge, and genuine curiosity can be major forces in creating a better understanding of each other.

After a day in the Human Library all participants went back home with new insights, having talked to people they normally would never have approached in the first place. The chief psychologist of University of Debrecen described it as a great initiative which really achieved something in the minds of the participants. After this great experience, it will for sure not be the last Human Library organised by AEGEE-Debrecen!

## Making Dreams Come True!

*Koen Berghuis, AEGEE-Cluj-Napoca*

While mostly the big conferences and ambitious projects are the most eye-catching events throughout the year, it is perhaps the smaller, local projects that truly shape the heart of AEGEE. Bound by a desire to give something back to the people in need of our society, a growing number of AEGEE locals are involved in small scale charity events.

Perhaps the most visible charity event last year was held by AEGEE-Budapest while hosting the Autumn Agora. During one of the sessions, they created a flashmob by making everyone throw a plush toy they brought along in the air. In the end, they collected all the toys and donated them to Ronald McDonald Charity House. More than 250 plush toys put smiles upon the faces of the little ones in a real Christmas miracle.

AEGEE-Skopje offered something completely different to charity: their spare time to host activities for children with no parents. They even gave the children presents and hosted lessons and workshops. Also AEGEE-Beograd and AEGEE-Nis spent time with over 1000 children this way. AEGEE-Kragujevac hosted similar activities for children, plus teamed up with Red Cross to gather clothes for refugees.

AEGEE-Kraków tried to raise 42000 zlotys by running a marathon with 42 students to help a girl who had lost her leg in an accident. Even people with no experience at all in running a marathon joined in the effort to raise money. In the end they succeeded, as not 42 but almost 60 AEGEE members completed the run. "All in all, this is what we do in AEGEE, isn't it? Pursuing our passion and making dreams come true, while helping others", concluded AEGEE-Kraków's Ola Połetek.

## Immigrants in Europe: A Forgotten Minority?

*Ante Sellis, AEGEE-Groningen*



AEGEE-Europe has always taken a strong stance towards equality and inclusion of minorities. Nowadays, the Inclusion of Minorities has even been granted a special status by being named one of AEGEE's main priorities during a period of three years. The question remains, though, how do we incorporate the vast and extensive topic of 'Inclusion of Minorities' within AEGEE's activities? Last April, AEGEE-Leuven and the Human Rights Working Group came up with an answer.

During four days, the collaborative forces of the Human Rights Working Group, members of AEGEE-Leuven, and the student section of Amnesty International in Leuven offered a unique experience to AEGEE members. Their event "Are we there yet? A journey through Europe's immigration policies" touched upon a relatively forgotten minority in Europe: the growing group of immigrants. By visiting a Belgian immigrant detention center, participate in a workshop with immigrants, and attending lectures about EU-immigration and detention policies by experts

from Amnesty International and the Belgian Constitutional Court, AEGEE members learned more about the pressing issue of migration.

Maria Arends, speaker of the Human Rights Working Group and co-organiser of this event, spoke enthusiastically about the successful event. "Over the last decades, more and more immigrants came to Europe looking for a better life. However, what they encountered here was not always a warm welcome, but complicated juridical procedures and a long quest for asylum. With this event, we aimed to really dig deep into the topic of immigration in Europe. The result of an intensive event such as this is that the topic just comes more to life to the participants than just reading a small article at home about it. It certainly was a huge eye-opener to me." The Human Rights Working Group certainly is inspired by their event in Leuven and might be planning some other great events in the near future. Keep your eyes open. You could be their next participant!

## Sports as a Key to Change Europe

*John Eikosidekas, AEGEE-Patra*

There are many differences around Europe on so many different levels. Even within our own countries there are differences! But one thing is understood perfectly well around the continent: whether differences exist in language, ethnicity, culture, sexual preference, or field of studies, there is one love that remains the same - sports! AEGEE's Sports Working Group (SWG) aims at that exactly: to unite Europeans from every corner of the continent through sports.

The SWG already manifested this last year in many different ways one of the main points in their Action Agenda: "Inclusion of Minorities in Sports". Football, for instance, has a great interest for many; not only around Europe, but around the world and thus it can bring people together. This is why the SWG organised a "Football Match Against Racism" during the Spring Agora Rhein-Neckar. People interested came forth to play, while talking about the problem of racism in sports. The event is planned during the Autumn Agora Zaragoza 2013 as well, bringing for a second time all AEGEE members together, and aiming to kick racism out of sports.

The importance of taking part in projects as the previously mentioned goes without saying. However, even of greater importance is seizing the chance to prove everyone that sports are not only about a ball being tossed around, but also important messages are conveyed and have a positive impact on society.

Also, during spring, the SWG worked together with the Human Rights Working Group and Policy Officer Eline De Graaf, in order to synchronise and create a flash mob across Europe on the International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO). The idea has been developed, creating, this way, the basis on which to make the project come true next year.

This is the wonderful thing about AEGEE: by



cooperating and creating a project through sports, all its members shape their mentalities and knowledge about Europe and its people, at the same time raising awareness to the world outside AEGEE.

The SWG has great potential for AEGEE and becomes more innovating by the day. It brings out the true colors of AEGEE and its meaning of existence. At the end of the day, it is not about the colour of your skin, or how you pray to God, or what language you speak. We all have one body, one heart, one mind, one soul. We are all on this planet, waking up every day, and trying to create a better tomorrow. And through sports we can all get a better feeling of this great connection we can have with each other.

## When Human Rights are at Threat

*Anna Gumbau Martínez, AEGEE-Barcelona*

*The beginning of June 2013 was a “dark week” when it comes to human rights, with citizens around Europe losing their right to protest, to same-sex marriage, and to access information.*

Turkey, 31st of May 2013. The peaceful protests around the preservation of the Gezi Park in Istanbul were suddenly heated up by the tough repression of the Turkish police, who threw tear gas to the demonstrators, assaulted them, and set off a spiral of widespread violence throughout the country.

Russia, a few days later: on the 11th of June the Parliament passed a law banning “gay propaganda”, which makes it illegal to equate straight and gay relationships and to distribute LGBT rights material. Many international organisations called the current situation “the worst human rights climate in the post-Soviet era”.

That same day, in Greece: the government announced the shutdown of ERT, the Greek public radio and television broadcasting service. Greek citizens were outraged by what was considered a censorship of public opinion. The unexpected announcement was immediately followed by the blank screens on every single TV in Greece, as soon as the ERT signal was cut.

Those shocking news took place in a very short period of time, but they were the proof that “there are still things going on on a frequent basis in Europe, people getting excluded because of who they are, what they believe in, or who they love”, says Maria Arends, speaker of the Human Rights Working Group.

What is more, the public opinion and the media gave little attention to these happenings. Turkish televisions played documentaries instead, and very few coverage was made for the two of them, making it harder to get information from the

local media. Foreign newswires, and mostly the Turkish, Russian, and Greek citizens themselves, became the most reliable sources of information.

The respect for human rights is one of the core values of AEGEE, and many members were directly involved in the protests in Turkey. The Network Commissioner and member of AEGEE-Istanbul, Meltem Darakci, was present in the protests in Taksim Square and valued the cooperation between all the Turkish antennae: “We wrote a manifesto for all the Turkish-speaking locals, we were in cooperation all the time, hearing from one another, and knew all the time what was going on”.

But the AEGEEans outside Turkey did not stay with arms crossed. The HRWG launched an initiative called light a candle for democracy in Turkey. More than a hundred AEGEEans, including entire antennae, sent a picture of them holding a lit candle and showing their support to the protesters.

The success of actions like that one meant that AEGEE and its members do care about human rights, despite of the distance. It meant that we can actually do something to stand up for a change. According to Maria Arends, what we can do to contribute is “to listen to people, to write about the situation we are in, and to share it, come up with actions we can do in AEGEE”. Above all, to share information and make people aware of how the situation really is.

After all, change can only start in ourselves drawing a path for a more inclusive society.

## Let's Turn Hate Speech Off



**NO HATE  
SPEECH  
MOVEMENT**

Anna Gumbau Martínez, AEGEE-Barcelona

*The Council of Europe supported two events held by AEGEE locals with the aim to combat hate speech on-line.*

Internet has become a powerful platform for self-expression and participation, where users can create and distribute their own media content and comments on them freely. We can stay in touch with old friends or the works of an artist in just a click, or get engaged to the causes we care about. However, we cannot deny the negative consequences of the apparent 'freedom' that social media gives. Offensive content is constantly posted on-line, meaning that many users are victims of insults and cyberbullying on a regular basis.

The Council of Europe has launched a project called *Young People Combating Hate Speech On-line*, to be running from 2012 to 2014. According to the Council of Europe, hate speech on-line covers „all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance“, and so the campaign aims to reduce hate speech and combat discrimination on-line.

### *Two AEGEE locals brightened their horizons against hate speech*

Combating hate speech on-line became the topic for two European events organised by the AEGEE locals of AEGEE-Bratislava and AEGEE-Katowice. The first one was a pre-event organised right before the Autumn Agora in Budapest in cooperation with the Human Rights Working Group of AEGEE, under the name of *Brighten your horizons!* The event gave a special insight to the dimension of racism and homophobia, two of the main points which the campaign is dealing with, and

insisted that human rights should also be applied in on-line platforms, even though hate-speech notes are harder to be controlled on the net.

The event held by AEGEE-Bratislava counted with the presence of other organisations, such as *ternYpe* (the International Roma Youth Network), or *People in Need* (a Czech Republic-based human rights NGO). Among their guests, Mária Ripomská, Member of the Slovak National Parliament, also gave her point of view on hate speech and the involvement not only of youth, but also of the government, and ensured his is one of the points in their agenda.

The following month, Marek Pezda, member of AEGEE-Katowice, organised the second event related to the *Young People Combating Hate Speech On-line* project with its own antenna, after coming back from the one in Bratislava. „We cannot remain silent, we have to raise our voice against intolerance in the internet“, that was the key principle that followed the three-day event in Poland. AEGEE-Katowice worked in close cooperation with other AEGEE projects, and there were representatives from the EuroArab Project and Europe on Track, which presented their ideas in relation with the no-hate speech on-line campaign.

In both cases, there was a clear conclusion: the aim of a more inclusive society is a path that starts on-line. Most of the regular Internet users have barely heard about what hate speech means, but spreading hatred can indeed leave many negative consequences. Let's turn it off!

## Think Loudly, Hold On to the Light!

Burak Topaloğlu, AEGEE-Eskişehir

Empathy Days project aims at mutual-understanding between people with and without disabilities about the difficulties the former face in their daily lives. AEGEE-Eskişehir gathers its members and people with disabilities for a day in order to share their perspectives about life and the developments that can make life easier for them. To accomplish that, the participants try to perform small daily tasks in a completely dark room, such as trying to reach to the sofa without falling, filling an empty cup with water, picking up a book from a shelf and even reading it, if possible, not being able to walk, trying to get from one place to another in a wheelchair, facing some obstacles, like pavements that are not well-designed, using public transportation, etc. Apart from the physical activity trials, both teams of participants come close by sharing personal stories, trying to understand how their daily lives are.

Everyone is welcome to participate, from 10 to 70 years old. It is almost a tradition of the anten-

na, since we having accomplished to organise the Empathy Days four times in the past year. Having experienced the success of the project, the current AEGEE-Eskişehir Board organised one during the EBM in Valletta where at least 70 AEGEE members from several AEGEE locals experienced the Empathy Room. As soon as the experience was over, we interviewed participants in order to make a video showing their reactions and feelings.

Even though we have organised this event four times in Eskişehir and also on the European level, there are still some members who want to continue and improve this project. Even if we don't know whether it will be developed and organised again in the years to come, we can proudly state that this is, no doubts, one of the most honourable work of AEGEE-Eskişehir, an activity which has made the antenna popular not only among locals but also and on the European level.



## Inclusion of Minorities Events

	<i>Organisers</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Participants</i>
Oct 12	AEGEE-Beograd	Reconnect vol2: Blindness	35
Oct 12	AEGEE-Leiden	Social Inclusion Information and Debating Evening	40
Nov 12	AEGEE-Katowice	Against Hate Speech On-line.	45
Dec 12	AEGEE-Debrecen	Human Library	30
Feb 13	AEGEE-Palermo	Culture Vulture day	25
Mar 13	AEGEE-Ankara	Bilateral Exchange About LGBT Rights	50
Mar 13	AEGEE-Kraków	Human Rights in Europe	45
Mar 13	AEGEE-Leuven	Human Rights Weekend	40
Apr 13	AEGEE-Agrigento	AEGEE-Agrigento: Meet Your Neighbours!	30
June 13	AEGEE-Moskva	Build our Tolerant Future	55

# Cultural Experience



In order to foster mutual **understanding**, AEGEE creates a space for members of different backgrounds to meet and learn about cultural differences. We support mobility and encourage young people to **cross borders** and make new friends, to break stereotypes and **strengthen tolerance**, respect and solidarity.



## Experiencing a New Dimension of Intercultural Dialogue in AEGEE

*Sandra Oborska and Morgane Hoarau, AEGEE-Kraków*



One year ago, when the EuroArab Project of AEGEE-Europe was born, the members of the team were already aware of the benefits of intercultural cooperation. Having already experienced working in such an environment, they knew how much both sides – the Europeans and the Arabs – can learn from each other. By sharing their experiences, best practices and different point of views they stepped into a new dimension of collaboration. Of course it was not the easiest thing to do.

### *More in common than against*

In an intercultural dialogue and cooperation there are a lot of aspects that need to be taken into consideration. It is not enough to apply the theoretical knowledge about intercultural interaction and conflict resolution. Instead, it requires a lot of patience, open-mindedness, compromi-

ses, and the willingness and readiness to try to understand the other person that comes from a totally different background and might have different beliefs and habits. It becomes visible that we Europeans and Arabs are exactly the same when it comes to dreams, everyday problems, worries, and emotions. Those are some of the powerful things that truly connect us. Why then not work together to achieve common goals?

### *Facing the challenge*

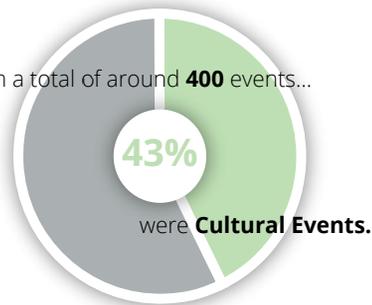
We all want to live in a prosperous and peaceful world with social justice. Our generation can really make a difference! Youth mobility is being highly supported nowadays, so we can use that opportunity to explore new territories and meet new people. We can dive into a different cultural context and discover the lives of the local societies, see whether the stereotypes that have developed in our heads are true or not. Challenging ourselves and coming out of our comfort zones can break the ice that unfortunately still exists between the European and Arab populations. We often fear the unknown therefore, in defense, we attack.

### *Be the change you want to see in the world*

If today we decide to open up our minds and practice intercultural dialogue, we will be one step closer to fulfilling one of AEGEE's main aims, which is to create an open and tolerant society. The process will not stop with us but will be continued with the next generations. The first step towards a better tomorrow starts within ourselves - with our own attitude and action. As Mahatma Gandhi once said: "Be the change you want to see in the world"!

## Cultural Events

From a total of around **400** events...



From a total of almost **18 000** participants...

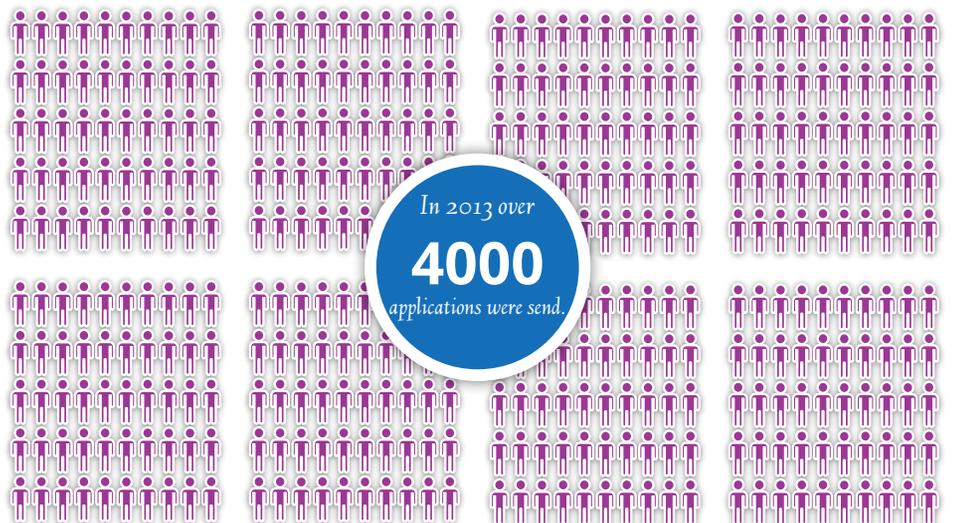
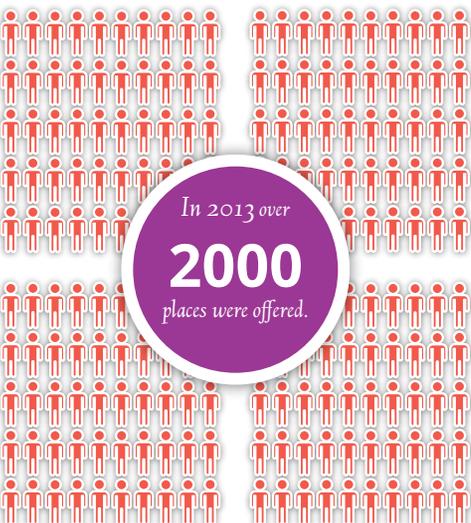
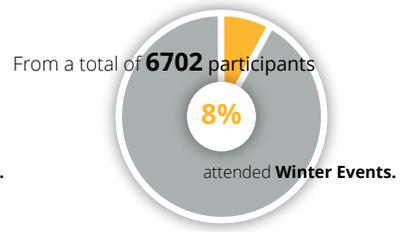
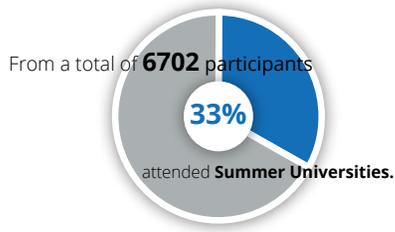
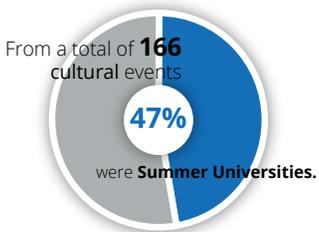
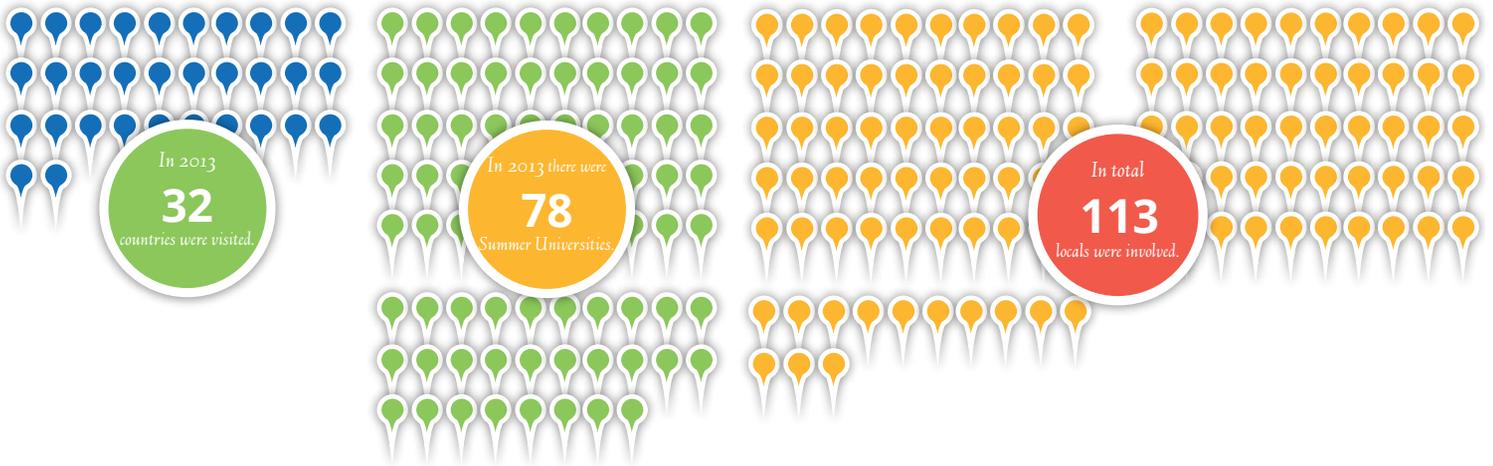


AEGEE is organising hundreds of cultural events which foster intercultural competence and a common understanding among the participants. The most known events are the Summer Universities. This year almost 7000 young people have shared their cultures in more than 150 events.

	<i>Organisers</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Participants</i>
July 12	AEGEE-Bratislava	L.E.G.E.N.D.S.	35
July 12	AEGEE-Ferrara, AEGEE-Reggio Calabria	Sunshine on the Land of Love - Calabria Coast to Coast	55
Aug 12	AEGEE-Beograd	Guca/Belgrade Beer Fest 2012	55
Aug 12	AEGEE-Bilbao	Surfing the Aste Nagusia	25
Aug 12	AEGEE-Frankfurt am Main	The Frankfurt Spectacular Art and Culture Festival	35
Aug 12	AEGEE-Napoli	2 Eat, 2 Play, 2 Love	35
Aug 12	AEGEE-Samara	Burst of Energy	25
Sep 12	AEGEE-Burgos	International Students Evening	25
Oct 12	AEGEE-Bamberg	Cultural Exchange with AEGEE Amsterdam	25
Oct 12	AEGEE-Cluj-Napoca	HELLoween from Transylvania	35
Oct 12	AEGEE-Delft	Opening Language Library	120
Oct 12	AEGEE-Mannheim	German and French Working Culture	20
Oct 12	AEGEE-Osnabrück	European Day of Languages	50
Oct 12	AEGEE-Passau	Music - Connecting People	35
Oct 12	AEGEE-Salerno	Erasmus Welcome Week	170
Nov 12	AEGEE-München	Running Dinner Vol. 2	45
Nov 12	AEGEE-Riga	European Day of Languages: Color the Language	350
Nov 12	AEGEE-Sibiu	Sibiu: AEGEE Capital of Culture	35
Nov 12	AEGEE-Tekirdag	European Day of Languages	50
Nov 12	AEGEE-Toulouse	European Running dinner	35
Nov 12	AEGEE-Wien	European Evening: Romania and Bulgaria	50
Dec 12	AEGEE-Leipzig	Walls to Bridges	35
Dec 12	AEGEE-Lyon	Lyon By Light 2012	35
Jan 13	AEGEE-Bergamo	International Dinner	45
Jan 13	AEGEE-Catania	Bilateral Exchange with AEGEE-Zagreb: European Idea	25
Jan 13	AEGEE-Kastoria	Traditional Carnival in the Way of Alcohol	35
Jan 13	AEGEE-Leipzig	Bilateral Exchange with AEGEE Toulouse: 50th anniversary of the Élysée Treaty	25
Feb 13	AEGEE-Agrigento	AEGEE Agrigento Intercultural Fest	55
Feb 13	AEGEE-Amsterdam	Rock the Boat	35
Feb 13	AEGEE-Cagliari	Cineforum in Original Language	140
Feb 13	AEGEE-Kiel	Deutsch-Norwegisches Studierendenseminar	30
Feb 13	AEGEE-Pisa	Italian Carnival Coast to Coast	25
Feb 13	AEGEE-Siena	Venezia Carnival	50

	<i>Organisers</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Participants</i>
Feb 13	AEGEE-Tilburg	Bilateral Exchange with AEGEE-Valletta: European Idea	35
Feb 13	AEGEE-Treviso, AEGEE Venezia	TREatre adVENTure - Venetian Carnival Extravaganza	25
Feb 13	AEGEE-Utrecht	Bilateral Exchange with AEGEE-Ankara: Creating Awareness for Minorities	30
Mar 13	AEGEE-Castelló	Local Annual Holiday: Madalena Party	25
Mar 13	AEGEE-Catania	Linguistic Aperitif	210
Mar 13	AEGEE-Chisinau	Dragobete and Martisor	40
Mar 13	AEGEE-Ferrara	EUROpean: European Diversity Through the Eye of Camera	45
Mar 13	AEGEE-Sibiu	Let's Breathe Theatre in Sibiu!	25
Mar 13	AEGEE-Tekirdag	OneTwoTrip For WineOut	30
Mar 13	AEGEE-Valencia	FALLAS 2013!! KEEP CALM... AND GO OUT WITH THE BANGGGGGGG!!!!	25
Mar 13	AEGEE-Valletta	Bilateral Exchange with AEGEE-Tilburg: European Idea	25
Mar 13	AEGEE-Voronezh	Cultural day	40
Mar 13	AEGEE-Wien	Cultural Cooking	35
Mar 13	AEGEE-Zadar	Cultural Exchange: Fostering Cooperation	15
Apr 13	AEGEE-Aachen	Erasmus Trip	120
Apr 13	AEGEE-Dnipropetrovsk	Diverse in Culture, United in Future	35
Apr 13	AEGEE-Eindhoven	Cultural Youth Exchange	25
Apr 13	AEGEE-Leipzig	Bilateral Exchange with AEGEE-Minsk	30
Apr 13	AEGEE-Messina	Bilateral Exchange with AEGEE-Coruña	18
Apr 13	AEGEE-Milano	Look @ MI (Iano)!	45
Apr 13	AEGEE-Nova Gorica-Gorizia	2 GOod to be True	45
Apr 13	AEGEE-Sheffield	Bilateral Exchange with AEGEE-Groningen	25
Apr 13	AEGEE-Tallinn	Cultural youth exchange	25
Apr 13	AEGEE-Voronezh	European Day of Languages	50
May 13	AEGEE-Gliwice	Let's Go to Italy	35
May 13	AEGEE-Izmir	Heat of the Flour	55
May 13	AEGEE-Lódz	Manufacturing Trip	40
May 13	AEGEE-Nova Gorica-Gorizia	LetsMOVEtheAEGEEspirit	25
May 13	AEGEE-Praha	Bilateral Exchange with AEGEE-Moskva	20
May 13	AEGEE-Ryazan	Cultural Exchange: Love is in the Air	15
May 13	AEGEE-Sofia	Cultural Exchange with AEGEE-Eindhoven	25
May 13	AEGEE-Valletta	Brussels Visit	25
May 13	AEGEE-Wien	Let's mEAT in Vienna	30
June 13	AEGEE-Kiel	Kieler Woche Event 2013	25
June 13	AEGEE-Leipzig	3DACS Leipzig - 3 Days of Action, Culture and Sports	25
June 13	AEGEE-München	SprachDUO Language Evenings	600
June 13	AEGEE-Passau	Cultural Exchange Budapest-Delft-Passau: European Identity	35
June 13	AEGEE-Passau	Greek Week	75
July 13	AEGEE-Gliwice	Explore Silesia	35
July 13	AEGEE-Milano	Summer Event	30

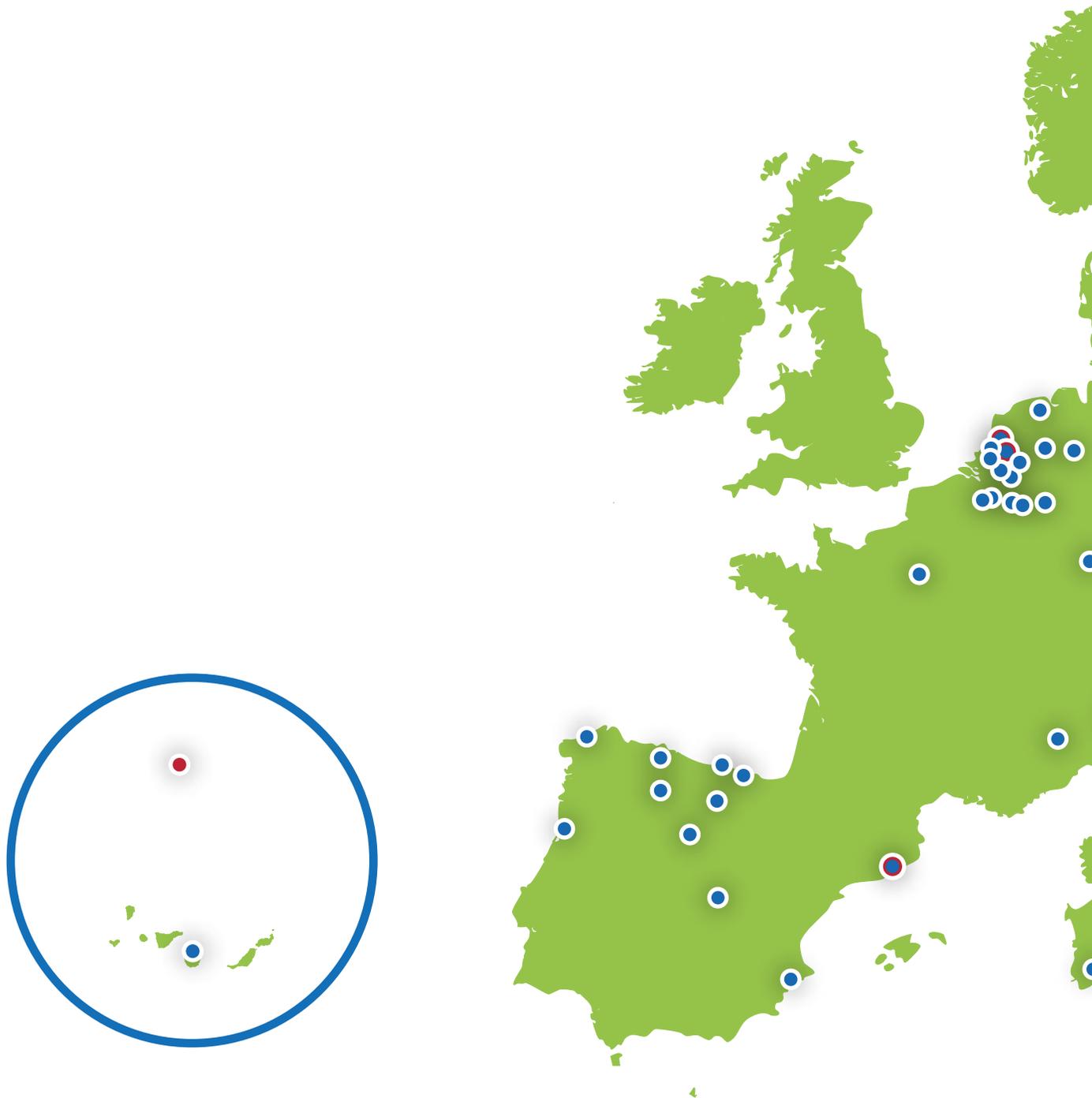
# Summer Universities 2013



Where did all the Summer Universities take place? Find out on the next page →

## Make the Most of Your Summer

*Summer Universities and Winter Events 2012-2013*



- local organised a summer university
- local organised a winter event
- local organised both



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# Environment & Sustainability



Environment and Sustainability have become buzzwords in our organisation lately, visibly gaining in importance in **the perspective** of our members. As an international organisation with events of up to 800 people taking part, we promote **alternative ways** of travelling and a more sustainable and, at the same time, healthier **lifestyle**.

## Sustainability in AEGEE: Impossible?

*Mathieu Soete, Policy Officer on Sustainability*

As I am writing this, 2200 AEGEE members are travelling to all corners of Europe for their two weeks of perfect summer holidays at one of AEGEE's 78 Summer Universities. While some participants make a point of hitchhiking to their destination, the vast majority will be flying by low-cost airlines — not exactly the most sustainable transportation option.

Yet, sustainability is receiving more and more attention within our association lately. Whether as a result of our successful presence at Rio+20, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development last year in Rio de Janeiro, or inspired by the relentless activity of the Environmental Working Group, sustainability is starting to emerge as a separate topic next to AEGEE's main fields of action.

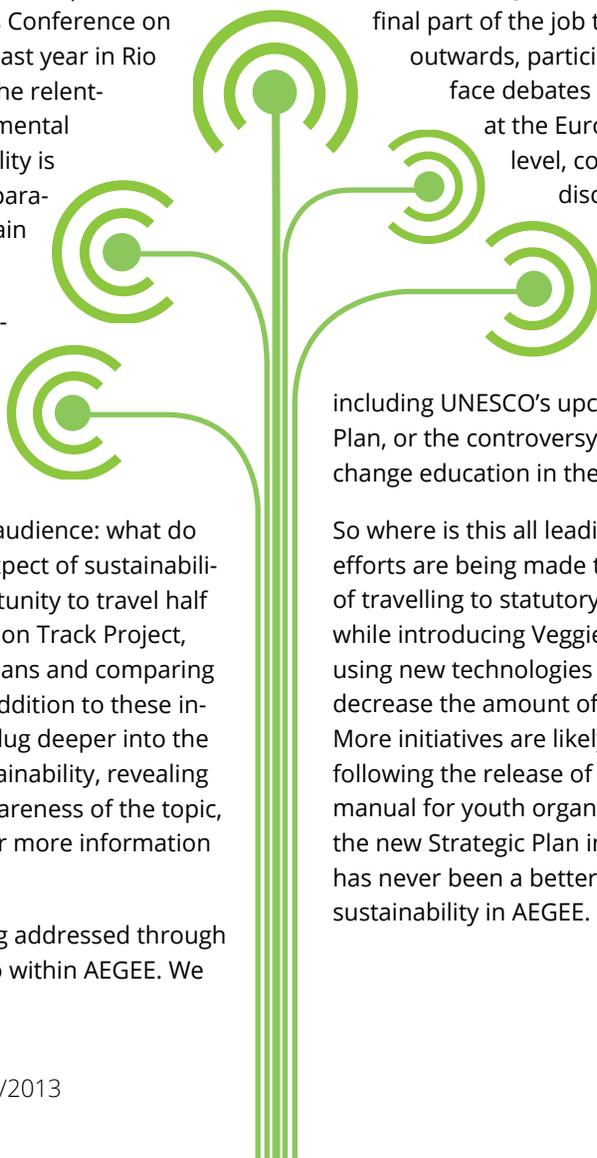
At the end of 2012 the Agora in Budapest even approved the appointment of AEGEE's first Policy Officer on Sustainability. In order to fulfil this task, I first needed to know my audience: what do people know, think, and expect of sustainability? I had the unique opportunity to travel half of Europe with the Europe on Track Project, interviewing young Europeans and comparing them with their peers. In addition to these invaluable stories, a survey dug deeper into the topic of Education for sustainability, revealing not only a decent basic awareness of the topic, but also an unmet need for more information and further learning.

Part of this interest is being addressed through non-formal education, also within AEGEE. We

organised a European School on Sustainable Entrepreneurship, the Spring Agora in Mannheim counted three sessions related to sustainability, several Summer Universities offer workshops on the topic, and AEGEE members will soon take part for the third time already in the Green Leaders project, aimed at reducing our ecological footprint.

But with the limited means for internal training alone we will never be able to create an impact which will be large enough. Therefore, the final part of the job turns the focus outwards, participating in face-to-face debates with policy-makers at the European and national level, contributing to on-line discussions such as the UN's The World We Want, and drafting positions and opinions on policy processes including UNESCO's upcoming Strategic Plan, or the controversy around climate change education in the UK.

So where is this all leading us? Already efforts are being made to reduce the impact of travelling to statutory and other events, while introducing Veggie Saturdays and using new technologies to significantly decrease the amount of printed materials. More initiatives are likely to be expected following the release of the Green Leaders manual for youth organisations, and with the new Strategic Plan in the pipeline, there has never been a better time to push for sustainability in AEGEE. It is possible!



# First Steps on the Healthy Lifestyle Field

Mayri Tiido & Matthijs Overhaal, Health4Youth Project

With the foundation of the Health4Youth project, AEGEE-Europe launched its very first healthy lifestyle initiative. This brand-new and fresh project aims to create a pool of knowledgeable students about healthy lifestyles and their influencing factors so that students can implement the gained knowledge for their own and also for others' future benefit.

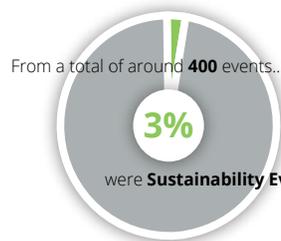
Students are in an important stage of their lives: they begin to make their own decisions about a lifestyle which will be the foundation for their future. These decisions are not always easy, since the lifestyle of Europeans has changed rapidly over the past years. We see a need to promote a healthy lifestyle towards the youth, and to empower youngsters to make healthy choices in their lives. By influencing the youth, we can ensure a sustainable and healthy future and therefore a healthier Europe.

More than 20 young Europeans work on fulfilling the goal of this project. As the target group is students from all over Europe, the team works to provide interesting and attractive information. Main tools to be used are non-formal education and a reliable on-line platform. As the project also aims to create health multipliers, it is important to offer opportunities for trainings in cooperation with other relevant youth health organisations.

Everyday life imposes a serious threat to the young generations, although opposing these threats is not the original goal of this project. A more positivistic approach is used, trying to focus on promoting a healthy lifestyle. Together we can make a change in the lifestyle of the youth, so it can become the fortune and future of Europe.

## Environmental Events

The environmental topic is becoming more and more important in AEGEE. 10 events on sustainability and environment have been organised this year, with 400 people participating to promote green and sustainable living and educate them to treat their environment with respect.



	Organisers	Title	Participants
July 12	AEGEE-Agrigento	AEGEE-Agrigento: Paint it GREEN!	55
Aug 12	AEGEE-Bialystok	Let's Meet in the Nature	35
Oct 12	AEGEE-Berlin	Green is the Colour Ecological Event	35
Apr 13	AEGEE-Cagliari	Enviromental Day	45
Apr 13	AEGEE-Maribor	Joint Consultation Event on Youth participation and Sustainability	45
Apr 13	AEGEE-Moskva	Make the City Green!	35
May 13	AEGEE-Izmir	Make it Green	65
May 13	AEGEE-Voronezh	Enviromental Day	30
June 13	AEGEE-Ankara	Eurensa 2013	45
June 13	AEGEE-Tartu	Healthy Cooking course	15

# Thank you!

We would like to THANK *everybody* who has taken part in the creation of this edition of the Key to Europe! Without you, it would not have been possible. We would like to thank you all for your effort and dedication, for your hard work, for the inspiration we all received.

Thank you, *dear writers!* Thank you *AEGEE locals* for the contribution! Thank you *photographers* for sharing your moments!

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Thank you *Kathrin* for your never ending support!

Thank you *Comite Directeur 2012/2013* for the endless list of actions and projects you have shared with us!



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